

## Perspectives on Entrepreneurial Learning in the Early Years of Education

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### Abstract

Questions regarding entrepreneurship have become a matter of great importance in Sweden as well as in the European Union at large. Since 2009, the government decided that entrepreneurial learning is to be conducted throughout the entire public school system in Sweden, from preschools to higher education. Because entrepreneurial learning is a fairly new concept to professionals in schools and preschools, our study contributes to the development of knowledge concerning how teachers perceive and realize it in practice. To study the meaning that the Swedish pre- and primary school teachers ascribe to the notion of entrepreneurial learning, a stimulated recall method was adopted. The study was conducted in Sweden in 2014 and involved preschools and primary schools. The sample consists of three preschools with children 3-5 years old and two primary schools, one represented by a mixed group of children from preschool-class to grade 3 and the other by a preschool-class group. The results show that teachers' understanding of entrepreneurial learning is connected to entrepreneurial learning as entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial learning as science and technology, and entrepreneurial learning as personal development.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial learning, preschool, primary school, early years

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the meaning that Swedish pre- and primary school teachers ascribe to the notion of 'entrepreneurial learning'. In this article we name both categories of teachers as teachers. Questions regarding entrepreneurship have become a matter of great importance in Sweden as well as in the European Union at large. The process of introducing entrepreneurship into education may be seen as a consequence of the political changes that have characterized the Western world during the last decade. The changes may be connected to neo-liberal market values where economic growth is being prioritized (Peters, 2001; Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Since 2009, the Swedish government has decided that an entrepreneurial approach is to be taught throughout the entire public school system, from preschools to higher education. However, there is no single model for how to work with an entrepreneurial approach in schools and there exists several definitions of entrepreneurship education (Berglund, 2007; Leffler, 2009). Even though the curriculum states the importance of encouraging skills and abilities that can lay the foundation for entrepreneurship (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011), it is up to the local schools to define what an entrepreneurial approach may refer to. Over the past few years there has in the policy documents been a shift from a managerial to a learning perspective, in which 'entrepreneurial learning' has been put forward as a way to accentuate pupil's active participation in transformative learning processes (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2015).

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Creativity, independence, flexibility, self-confidence and an ability to solve problems are examples of enterprising abilities that are being emphasized in the policy documents (Leffler, 2006; Svedberg, 2007). When it comes to research, Swedish scholars have focused on general abilities, rather than on a business orientation (Falk-Lundqvist, Hallberg, Leffler & Svedberg, 2011; Johannison & Madsén, 1997). The enterprise perspective, which has to do with a general approach to life and to pedagogy, has been named an *internal* discourse (Leffler, 2006; Komulainen et al., 2011). The perspective that focuses on a business orientation has been described as an *external* discourse of entrepreneurship education (Leffler, 2006). Even though the connection with economic growth often is avoided nowadays in favor of the wider definition that includes cultural and social aspects, earlier research have pointed out that these two definitions are used simultaneously (Leffler, 2009). The external discourse still prevails, for example in extra-curricular activities and projects, as well as in upper secondary courses in 'how to start and run a business'. Earlier research has pointed out that discourses of *internal* and *external* entrepreneurship are expressed in complex ways, and that there is a need for a critical reflection regarding the unexpected effects of the implementation of this policy, its interpretation and enactment (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2012; Peters, 2001).

On that account, the study will contribute to educational research through its investigation of how teachers perceive their mission and ascribe meaning to a new curricular content. This study's starting point is the assumption that given a curricular content, the participants involved ascribe meaning and enact it in different ways in different learning environments depending on the participants' interpretations and translations. There is not a given core or consensus of what this area is or what parts or aspects the curricular content should encompass. Earlier research has been concerned for the most part about compulsory and upper secondary school, but has focused to a lesser extent on preschool (Berglund, 2012). We address this gap in this study, where we particularly direct our interest towards the early years. Because entrepreneurial learning is a fairly new concept to professionals in schools and preschools, our study contributes to the development of knowledge concerning how teachers perceive it and realize it in practice. Based on this, our questions are: What are the meanings that Swedish teachers ascribe to the notion of 'entrepreneurial learning'? What are the possibilities and constraints in realizing entrepreneurial learning in schools and preschools?

## 2. Earlier Research

In their study 'Education in Change' from 1997, Johannison and Madsén argued for the importance of working with entrepreneurship in school. Here, they specifically point to active cooperation with industries as well as with other forms and contexts for learning. Entrepreneurial learning is regarded in this example as an act of creation, where cooperation between individuals is seen as central. The emphasis on entrepreneurship as an act of creation has played an important part in a strategy for dealing with the challenges of our time. This emphasis on new possibilities and creation has also been put forward in transferring entrepreneurship from the business sector to the educational sector (Berglund & Johansson, 2007). There are several other examples within a Swedish context of how entrepreneurship is regarded as an almost necessary development for education (e.g., Cervantes, 2005; Otterborg, 2011; Falk-Lundqvist et al., 2011). Keywords like *creativity*, *power of initiatives*, *motivation*, and *cooperation* are used to show how an entrepreneurial pedagogy may develop a teaching focused on utilizing pupils' driving forces within all school subjects. Politis (2005) points out that entrepreneurial learning may involve experiential processes, and that learning within an entrepreneurial context is experiential in nature. He also argues that innovative individuals continuously develop their entrepreneurial knowledge throughout their professional lives. Seŋkane (2014) reflects that both preschool and primary school objectives concentrate upon personal enterprise development, cross-curricular activity, and socialization with adults. She points out that preschool is an appropriate environment for the development of children's entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, and behavior. She claims that society has to recognize and realize the potential for pre-school education—that is, it prepares children for both a successful school entry and a future life. As a counterpoint, critical voices are to be heard with regards to the role of entrepreneurship in schools (e.g. Holmgren & From, 2004; Leffler & Svedberg, 2004; Leffler, 2006; Mahieu, 2006). Leffler (2006) points out that it is important to distinguish between the entrepreneurial perspective that focuses on a business orientation (an external discourse) and the enterprise perspective concerning the development of an individual's inherent abilities (an internal discourse). Her results show that teachers are still wrestling with the contribution of entrepreneurship in school activities. Insulander, Johansson, and Säfström (2013) demonstrate how internal and external discourses around the entrepreneurial approach are being mixed up in school contexts, which creates mixed messages for teachers as well as for pupils.

In studies about entrepreneurial learning, a diversity of learning theories has been used and a variety of definitions have been expressed, focusing on competency, co-participation, problem-based learning, actionlearning, and learning organizations as an orientation towards learning (Albornoz & Rocco, 2009).

Dahlstedt and Hertzberg (2012) also imply that entrepreneurial learning in a limited sense emphasizes knowledge of economics (learning about entrepreneurship as a matter of business), while entrepreneurial learning in a comprehensive sense is related to education in general. From their point of view, entrepreneurial learning has to do with the formation of students who have the talent and are described as characteristic of the 'entrepreneur'—he or she who is energetic, creative and flexible and has the ability to make decisions and develop ideas. The authors maintain that entrepreneurial learning is about transforming students' personalities. They describe it as a perception that students with an 'entrepreneurial approach' can overcome barriers that arise from negative ideas, thoughts, and behavior. They give examples of entrepreneurial learning as sometimes based on projects and learning by doing. Komulainen, Naskali, Korhonen, and Keskitalo-Foley (2011) claim that the focus on individually oriented abilities can be connected to neoliberal values, which now seem to be replacing the humanistic values that previously characterized the school's mission.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this article is an understanding of learning and development informed by a sociocultural perspective (Vygotskij, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003). A basic point of departure is that learning and development are *situated* in and an inseparable aspect of social practices. Tools, both physical and linguistic, are seen as crucial resources for learning and development. (Säljö, 2000). The concept of *situatedness* is rooted in Vygotskij's theory about people acting, thinking, and communicating based on the experiences they have had in the social context they are in (Vygotskij, 1978; 1999). Rogoff (2003) puts it: "...people transform through their ongoing participation in cultural activities, which in turn contribute to changes in their cultural communities across generations." (p.37) We consider in the analysis teachers' thoughts, understandings, and expressions as socially constructed and *situated* in certain practices. How teachers describe their practice is contingent on their understanding of the curricula, different content areas, teaching goals, methods they have used, and their experiences in practice. Previous experiences brought into a situation are considered important for the understanding of an actual practice. From this view, teachers' roles for children's learning and development are to provide opportunities for children to be engaged and have different experiences in the community of practice that a preschool or a school can be. As an analytical tool we use the concept *zone of proximal development, or ZPD* (Vygotskij, 1978). The zone of proximal development can be understood as the distance between what a person can accomplish by herself and what the same person can do under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotskij, 1978). The concept of ZPD can also be interpreted as the difference in an individual's everyday knowledge and their scientific knowledge, expressed as knowledge actively owned by an individual and the knowledge carried to the individual by instructions.

### 4. Method

The study was conducted in Sweden in 2014 and involved preschools and primary schools. The sample consists of three preschools with children 3-5 years old and two primary schools. One primary school was represented by a mixed group of children from preschool-class to grade 3 and the other by a preschool-class group. In the presentation of the findings we name them preschools 1, 2 and 3 as well as schools A and B. In total, nine preschool teachers and three primary school teachers participated. The principal of each preschool was asked to select the participating classes and teachers on the basis of the teachers' own interest in participating. Ethical aspects were taken into consideration, including, confidentiality, consent, information, and autonomy, with an emphasis that participation in the study was voluntary (Swedish Research Council, 2011). To study the meaning that the Swedish pre- and primary school teachers ascribe to the notion of entrepreneurial learning, a stimulated recall method was adopted. Meade and McMeniman (1992) consider the stimulated recall method a valuable methodology to get a deep understanding of the implicit theories and views of teachers, and the relationship between beliefs and teaching. This stimulated recall method is designed to access teachers' perceptions during teaching. The situation observed and recorded was chosen by the teachers as one which involved entrepreneurial learning by their own definition. The video was recorded by the researchers. When using the method of stimulated recall, the teachers are presented video recordings of their teaching. The video recordings are then used as a basis for a semi-structured interview.

The recording and the interview took place the same day at the preschool respectively the school. In a stimulated recall interview, the researchers challenge the teachers about some specific situations. The idea is to get a deeper understanding of how teachers define and reflect on these specific situations.

This method triggers practice reflections and gives the teachers a chance to display their knowledge (Busse & Borromeo Ferri, 2003; Goule, Jacques, Gagnon, Racette, & Sieber, 2007). In our study the intention was to let the teachers express their perceptions about entrepreneurial learning. The study is based on the theoretical understanding that teachers' thoughts, understandings, and expressions are socially constructed and *situated* in the practices they are in. The interviews allowed the teachers to describe both their practice and the video recorded activities. We think that that gave us the opportunity to come close to their understanding of entrepreneurial learning. As a starting point we used an interview guide with some open questions related to the research questions. Next there was a playback of the video recording, and during the interview the teachers were asked to stop the recording whenever they felt the need to comment or discuss the specific sequence. The interviews were recorded with an mp3-recorder for later transcription. The video recordings and interviews were transcribed using a transcription key, with a focus on verbal language. The transcription was made word-for-word. Movement and gestures were thus described to a limited extent. The focus in this article is on the interview data, but also on the video recorded situations that the teachers choose to reflect on in the interview. In the result we therefore also describe some of the video recorded activities to give the reader some insight into the activities that the interviews touched upon. The analytical process was inductive. During the process each researcher first read the transcriptions several times and underlined passages of interest corresponding to the research questions. We as researchers met at several occasions and discussed our findings. These were eventually shaped into patterns. This step of the process led to a written text supported by quotes and examples from each of the three preschools and two schools. During the analytical phase we discerned three categories representing the teachers' understanding of entrepreneurial learning. We name these: (a) entrepreneurial learning as entrepreneurship, (b) entrepreneurial learning as science and technology, (c) entrepreneurial learning as personal development.

## 5. Results

As a point of departure for the analysis, we see the teachers' understanding and perceptions of the concept *entrepreneurial learning* as situated in the social practice they are in, how they ascribe to the notion of the concept, within what areas they perceive the concept, or how they perceive possibilities and constraints for entrepreneurial learning can therefore be seen as a part of the preschool or the school as a community of practice. It is clear that teachers in all five practices more or less understand and define the concept in a way that corresponds to the three categories we discerned but within their own approaches. The result of the analysis is presented in three headings. These headings correspond to the three categories we discerned.

### 5.1 Entrepreneurial Learning as Entrepreneurship

The category *entrepreneurial learning as entrepreneurship* derives from a perception of entrepreneurial learning as learning about 'real' things for 'real' purposes. This 'real' thing is found in or is connected to communities outside the preschool or the school. This definition is clearly expressed at the primary school level, but to a certain degree also at the preschools. At the preschools the idea is manifested in the teachers' striving to prepare children not for now, but for school. At the primary schools the idea is made clear in teachers' effort to connect activities in school to the rest of society, giving the advantage to the business community but also to children's families and others in the immediate community. The teacher at primary school A says: *The school should not become a shielded part of the community. So that they understand, I must know this to become a computer engineer, or if I want to work as a vet then I have to learn all this weird stuff with chemistry and biology, and all such things.* At both primary schools the teachers point out that they often work with projects like exhibitions and musicals. One of the purposes is to show that what is done in school is also interesting for others to see and take part in. At primary school A we observed a lesson where the preschool-class to grade 3, about 40-50 pupils, was practicing for a musical based on the tale 'Little Red Riding Hood'. A week later, they were to perform the musical to their relatives. At this school, entrepreneurial learning is defined as working with something 'real' and being creative and finding solutions to problems. The teacher describes this musical as 'real' because they are going to perform it to their families and others outside school, and it is a creative activity because the different classes have written their own lyrics to the song 'The Wanderer', which is about 'Little Red Riding Hood'. One of the classes has also written the script for the musical based on the classic tale. The rehearsal we observed was loosely planned around the songs and the skits, in which the task was to collaborate on a presentation. The environment allowed the pupils to move freely and it even encouraged movement, which created anxiety.

The teachers were not happy with the rehearsal, and they tried again in the afternoon. As the teacher reflected on the film recorded at the first rehearsal, she points out that they as teachers should have structured the rehearsal better from the beginning. It was too difficult a task for the pupils to manage by themselves.

She also says that some arrangements are problematic for pupils who find it difficult to concentrate when group formations are diverse or big, as at the rehearsal of the musical. One of the teachers at primary school A explains that they try to find solutions for those pupils and says: *It can really be difficult for some children. There are some that really need everything to be the same way. Everything the same, every day. They really don't like that we now and then work in mixed groups. But to have that flexibility is part of the concept, so we try a little bit at a time. You have to have some lenient. They can do some part by their own and some together with others.* The teachers find it important to find these solutions because they think that teaching based on collaboration among pupils and teachers is part of entrepreneurial learning. The teacher at primary school A also says that it is important that all pupils at the school are kept up to date on what is happening in other classes at the school because it provides opportunities for them to support, encourage, and learn from each other. Pupils generally are expected to work in pairs or in groups in their own grade but also with peers other grades. Our interpretation is that the role of the teacher is to create situations where pupils can learn from others in a zone of proximal development. It is obvious that both primary schools have an ambition to arrange activities where pupils can engage in each other's and others' work and collaborate with peers and communities outside the school.

## 5.2 Entrepreneurial Learning as Science and Technology

The category *entrepreneurial learning as science and technology* derives from a perception of entrepreneurial learning as something innovative. At both the primary schools and the preschools, technologies such as computers and iPads are welcomed into daily activities, and the teachers connect entrepreneurial learning to the use of technologies and science. One of the teachers at preschool 1 says that her interpretation of entrepreneurial learning is: *To be able to have an idea and then make decisions connected to it, and be able to take it from idea to something completed, whether it has to do with technology or if it is something else.* At Preschool 1 we visited a group of 4-5-year olds and three teachers during a morning when they worked on the concept of 'Flashes of Genius'. The concept is designed to make children curious about science and technology. Some attributes are associated with the concept such as labcoats and plastic glasses, and in putting the scene, the children are supposed to go into the role of an inventor. The activity we observed invited the children to work individually because the teachers wished the children to become more independent in their decision making and in their innovation process and not just to imitate their peers. The teachers at this preschool express that independence can be connected to the confidence to innovate things on your own, which is an ability the concept 'Flashes of Genius' aims to strengthen. In the activity we observed, the children's inventions consisted of pieces of cardboard on to which the teachers assisted in gluing different parts from screwed-apart apparatuses by means of a glue gun. The children are free to decide what their inventions should look like, but they are not allowed to glue pieces together because of the risk of getting burned by the glue gun. After that the teachers watched the film recorded at the observation; they pointed out that it becomes clear that the children are pretty controlled by external circumstances, despite the idea says that children themselves are supposed to realize the idea of an invention. One of the teachers:

*I feel like it is an obstacle that you must glue for them. It is an obstacle in their own work. I would like a material they can work with by themselves. I think it is sad that they must wait for their turn, it's sort of a stop. I want them to push, 'Go and fetch', 'make by yourself'. But we have no other material that works.* It becomes clear in the interview that this activity, despite the teachers' intentions, doesn't fully correspond to what they define as entrepreneurial learning. They discover that the activities don't fully make possible the development of entrepreneurial abilities such as working individually. At preschool 2, we visited a group of 3-to-5-year-old children and four teachers. These teachers also connected entrepreneurial learning to construction of things and problem solving. Among other activities, the teachers initiated a construction activity called 'mirror construction'. In this activity children sit on opposite sides of a large board, which a preschool teacher holds up in the middle of a rug. There are five children on each side of the board and each group has a set of large Lego pieces. One group at a time builds up the pieces, while the second group follows the group's instructions and tries to achieve a similar construction with the help of only the instructions. In each group there is a child who is responsible for building, while the others provide support and help make decisions. When the building is done, the board is moved aside so the children can see the result. One of the teachers describes the idea of initiating an activity like this as offering children ideas for their free play and says:

It gives them conditions to come up with new ideas of how to continue the same activity. They can continue by the rules we have suggested or they can come up with their own rules. Our interpretation is that the activities in that way are supposed to function as zones of proximal development (Vygotskij, 1978).

At the primary schools, entrepreneurial learning is connected to technology and science. At primary school B we observed a lesson in science. The teachers at this school expressed that entrepreneurial learning is about letting pupils' explanations be discussed in comparison with more conventional explanations. The preschool class we observed had planted beans some weeks earlier and at the lesson that we visited, the teachers repeated for the pupils what a plant needs to live and in a dialogue with the pupils they also have the intention of letting pupils express their understanding of the phenomenon. At the first part of the lesson one of the teachers asks leading questions like: Why do trees have roots? Why do they need water? As pupils responded, the teacher reinforced only the answers that were scientifically correct. Most of the children in the group concentrated and listened to each other and the teacher. When the session with questions and answers was over, the pupils were supposed to make a story with pictures and text about what a plant needs to live and grow. The pupils chatted with each other in the working process and the teachers walked around and asked about the drawings and writing. When everyone was finished, some of the pupils were asked to show their pictures and talk about them in front of their peers. The first part of the lesson created opportunities for learning by listening, but it provided limited opportunities for the pupils to be active. The conversation was directed towards remembering, where the teacher asks leading questions to establish concepts like roots, carbon dioxide, and chlorophyll. In the children's own work the teachers' comments show that they are interested in the pupil's own explanations and understandings. As the teachers see the video recording, they become aware of the fact that they very much dictate the first part of the lesson. They therefore underline that the entrepreneurial learning processes lie in the part of the lesson where pupils were working with their own explanations in conversation with peers. Our interpretation is that the teachers intend to shape a lesson where pupils' everyday knowledge can be challenged by scientific knowledge, which we understand to be a zone of proximal development. Despite that intention, they have difficulties in connecting pupils' own explanations to scientific explanations, and therefore these different explanations are separated in the lesson. It becomes clear that the entrepreneurial learning processes, as defined by these teachers, are connected only to the part of the lesson where pupils express their own explanations.

### 5.3 Entrepreneurial Learning as Personal Development

Our interpretation is that the category *entrepreneurial learning as personal development* is the most obvious category at the preschools and the schools. Teachers at all three preschools and at both primary schools express that entrepreneurial learning processes are supposed to develop, for instance, creativity, fantasy, self-esteem, and social skills. At preschool 1, where the teachers' understanding of the concept of entrepreneurial learning is situated in their work with the concept of 'Flashes of Genius', they point at the importance of children learning to think new thoughts, make decisions, and pursue an idea. At preschool 2 the teachers also relate imagination to entrepreneurial learning. They too believe that entrepreneurial learning processes strengthen children's self-esteem, give them the opportunity to act in a group, and teach them to listen to others and develop skills to communicate and function socially in a group. According to one of the teachers, drama exercises are an example of how to work with entrepreneurial learning. She says: *It's about strengthening the individual, as we have said before. You dare to stand in front of a small group and act.*

At this preschool they also point out the importance of activities at the preschool being based on the interests of children, and of children having a say in what happens. One example of how to involve the children in decision making is to vote. One of the activities we observed at this preschool was teachers reading a book aloud to the children. The children voted which book to hear. The teachers described that they often use different ways to vote on what the group should do or what to choose. At preschool 3 we visited a group of 3-to-5-year-old children and three teachers. This preschool bases their work on the Reggio Emilia philosophy; when the pre-school teachers describe their work, they use concepts and terms such as 'a child's hundred languages' and 'the competent child', which are derived from this philosophy. One of the teachers says: *A value that [our] preschool has is 'the competent child' and it's from there we do like everything. (...) So all the time we let the child be the one to take the time and be the leader of the development. We are just pedagogues in the background to provide supportive care for them at occasions where it is needed as well, to challenge further.* Even before these teachers met the concept of entrepreneurial learning, they had an initial point of reference in their work that already was based on developing abilities they now connect to entrepreneurial learning. That is abilities include: taking initiative, being creative, using the imagination, and having social skills. These teachers also point out that it is important that children's interests are the starting point for all activities at the preschool and that everything that happens at the preschool should boost children's self-esteem.

Our interpretation is that these teachers have received a new concept to use when explaining their work. They think entrepreneurial learning is a concept more up to date that relates to the work they already do.

The concept of entrepreneurial learning becomes clearly situated in their Reggio Emilia–inspired community of practice. The activity we observed at preschool 3 began with one of the teachers gathering the children so they could share their experiences of robots with each other. Earlier they had worked in pairs and had made drawings of robots, and at this occasion they were supposed to tell each other how they were going to construct a robot. After the dialogue about robots, they went to another room and started to build their own robots. The environment appeared to be permissive, where children could be self-sufficient and had great opportunities to initiate and control their activities. The children were allowed to try different strategies in a search of solutions. It was obvious that these teachers saw themselves as supporters of a process. This standpoint is expressed at primary school A, where the teacher points out that the role of the teacher is to support pupils' creativity. At primary school B, this opinion is underlined, as teachers say that entrepreneurial learning processes are about letting pupils be in charge of their ownwork. At primary school B the teachers emphasize that almost every child is curious as she begins preschool-class; they assume that a school without an entrepreneurial approach risks hindering this curiosity. Of course, they always wish to capture pupils' interest and curiosity, but both teachers believe that working according to the concept of entrepreneurial learning has helped them make this so. They say that the work has not resulted in any major changes, and one of them says: *There is nothing you don't already do, but you need to think about what it is that is entrepreneurial in what you already do.* Both teachers felt that it is a problem that not all colleagues at the school have grasped that working with entrepreneurial learning processes is as simple as that. They very much desire support from the principal that gives clear guidance for everyone to develop teaching based on the idea of entrepreneurial learning at the whole school.

## 6. Discussion

As mentioned earlier the concept entrepreneurship education is to be implemented throughout the entire public school system (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). The national agency has published guidelines on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning on their website but there are no agreed upon guidelines, for how to implement entrepreneurship in schools. Each school and preschool have to do their own interpretations of the concept and what the implementation of it could mean in practice. The meanings that Swedish pre- and primary school teachers ascribe to the notion of 'entrepreneurial learning' becomes situated in the different communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Someone in the team or the principal may have attended a course or read a book or an article about it and tries to inspire others. In a Swedish context, this is not a problem in itself, because the understanding is that there is no given core or consensus about what constitutes a certain curricular content. However, if the content is new—such as with entrepreneurial learning—it can be seen as a problem. Not all teachers have been given time to process this new content. The understanding and interpretation of what the concept entails become dependent upon single individuals. The teachers are reduced to their own interpretation, or their colleagues' interpretations, and the understanding will be situated indeed.

One strategy that occurs is to connect entrepreneurial learning to a philosophy or way of working that is already known. The teachers are given a new concept to use for explaining their work. At the same time, we see this as a strategy to make preschool or school externally visible, for parents, principals, and responsible authorities (Vallberg Roth, 2010; Bjervås, 2011). This is in line with the ideology of new public management, where the public sector is to display their results in order to be evaluated. As Leffler (2006) points out, there are two discourses that concern entrepreneurial learning: the external discourse and the internal discourse. Our results show that both discourses prevail, but even in the cases where the internal discourse is heavily stressed—to promote self-esteem and independence—the external perspective is clearly present. Teachers at both schools stress the idea of connecting school to society, of preparing children for work life and for the future. This becomes problematic for students who have difficulties concentrating in larger groups or in those cases where new groups constantly are formed. In those cases, as is emphasized by the teacher in school A, there is a need to work especially with those pupils, so that they get used to this way of working. It is perceived to be an important aspect of what it's like in 'real life'. Even though several teachers intend to work along the lines of the internal discourse, there are constraints in the tools that are used. Tools meant to support teachers in their realization of an entrepreneurial approach instead may be a hindrance.

In some cases, for example with 'Flashes of Genius', it seems that the concept with its different steps becomes the focus more than the abilities that it is supposed to develop. Several of these steps, such as working in isolation and gluing, seem in fact to be a hindrance to children's independence. In the study, we have highlighted both possibilities and constraints for entrepreneurial learning in schools and preschools.

This study shows that the activities associated with entrepreneurial learning make possible learning within the zone of proximal development (Vygotskij, 1978). In the category *entrepreneurial learning as entrepreneurship*, we can see that teachers design activities where children can collaborate with peers and communities outside the school. In the category *entrepreneurial learning as science and technology*, the teachers offer situations that challenge children's everyday scientific knowledge. The activities within the category *entrepreneurial learning as personal development* also make it possible for children to think originally and to pursue an idea in collaboration with others. As we have pointed out earlier, there are problems in both the external and internal discourses. As a team of teachers decides to work along the lines of a particular model, such as 'reaching out and making it real', this intention sometimes becomes so dominant that other ways of thinking are overlooked. From the results of our study, we wish to raise some concerns: How do we regard the children that don't wish to work along these lines? There are children who find constant shifts and changes in group constellations uncomfortable. And what about children who don't wish to be active, to take initiative and perform? Isn't it possible for those children to develop abilities that are associated with entrepreneurship (Komulainen et al, 2001)? When an entrepreneurial approach is supposed to run through all aspects of education, there is a risk that other ways of teaching are excluded. Our research shows that the intentions of the teacher, the planned activity, sometimes become more important than the abilities teachers wish the children to develop. A central approach in Swedish early childhood education is to emphasize the interests of children, which demands from teachers the ability to see and try to understand what is going on in the group without a set frame of expectations and norms. Entrepreneurial learning embraces these trains of thoughts, as defined by teachers, but they don't always correspond to how the approach is realized.

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