

Educating towards the prudent entrepreneurial self – an educational journey including agency and social awareness to handle the unknown

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper explores the idea of the prudent entrepreneurial self, through re-conceptualizing prudence into the domain of entrepreneurial education, to unite the two processes of becoming enterprising and entrepreneurial. It is argued that developing a capacity for prudence among graduates involves past, present and conjecture forms of knowledge that the authors find in the interplay between individuation and social awareness.

Design/methodology/approach – Building on Palmer's idea of wholeness, the authors discuss six poles of paradoxes in entrepreneurial education and in conjunction establish a philosophical argument for the idea of stimulating the development of prudence as fundamentally important to contemporary notions of entrepreneurial education.

Findings – The paper presents a model to develop a schema that moves students towards becoming prudent entrepreneurial selves. The model rests on two interrelated developmental processes – individuation and social awareness – conditional for developing the three forms of knowledge (past, present and conjecture) that makes up prudence where developing prudence is a means to handle or cope with the unknown.

Research limitations/implications – This paper argues that for enterprise and entrepreneurship education to realize their potential contributions, both the relationships between each field and the overarching purpose that ties the fields together need to be rethought, and the poles of paradoxes need to be connected to further develop both fields and creating wholeness for the emerging scholarly discipline.

Practical implications – To educate towards the prudent entrepreneurial self means educating towards an unknown end where student development aims to meet both the objectives of individual development and the growth in social awareness required to handle the changing nature of contemporary society.

Originality/value – This study philosophically conceives a united enterprise and entrepreneurship education landscape in which deeper student learning makes possible the notion of the prudent entrepreneurial self.

Keywords Entrepreneurial education, Learning, Prudence, Wholeness, Wisdom

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

Entrepreneurial education is in vogue and has seen an exponential growth of interest in the last four decades (Hägg and Gabrielsson, 2019; Nabi *et al.*, 2017). It has been connected to the economy as a vital function for regenerating stagnated industries through start-up and intrapreneurial activities, and it has also been promoted to develop entrepreneurial competencies closely connected to the archetype of the entrepreneurial self. Hence, the outcome of entrepreneurial education on the individual level is tied to a politically made persona materialized through both Homo oeconomicus and the enterprise culture (Ball, 1989; Keat and Abercrombie, 1991; Lemke, 2001; Peters, 2005; Rose, 1996), as well as the 21st century progressive learner (Hägg and Kurczewska, 2019; Jones *et al.*, 2014; Neck and Corbett, 2018) that strives to develop enterprising behaviour *vis-a-vis* an entrepreneurial mindset. However, the dual nature bound to the versatility of the phenomenon, sometimes illustrated as the hunt for the heffalump (Matlay and Henry, 2015), has been stirring up much inconclusive standpoints on how to best take a learner through an entrepreneurial educational process (Fayolle *et al.*, 2016; Jones, 2019b).

In recent years, there has been a growing call in entrepreneurial education research where scholars have sought to bring clarity towards what should be taught, how it should be taught, to whom it should be taught and why it should be taught. In this call, we can see Fayolle (2013) providing arguments for legitimacy, stronger intellectual roots to anchor our learning activities in and to critically assesses our practice and what it might lead towards (see also Fayolle *et al.*, 2016; Pittaway and Cope, 2007; Rideout and Gray, 2013). In addition, and following a similar line of arguments, Kyro (2015) reminds us that we need to build bridges between educational science and entrepreneurial education, something that Bécharde and Toulouse (1991) early on sought to merge, as well as Gibb (1993). Together these activities are collectively working towards Vesper and Gartner's (1997) unanswered call for leadership in this field of learning. Following some of the ideas laid out by Gibb, there is also the early call by Jack and Anderson (1999) that critically examined the enterprising culture and pointed towards the development of self-aware and reflective graduates that could take on the daunting effort of an entrepreneurial career. In addition, we also have the recent discussion on developing a scholarship for teaching and learning in entrepreneurship (c.f., Neck and Corbett, 2018) and a closely related discussion on signature pedagogies (Jones, 2019b). Finally, there is also an emerging trend seeking to strengthen the philosophical positioning of entrepreneurial education, which to a large extent builds on progressive educational thoughts and the role of practical wisdom (Hägg and Kurczewska, 2016; Johannisson, 2016; Jones, 2019b). However, since entrepreneurial education is a young academic subject, the number of frameworks is plentiful where scholars in different contexts have sought to give their voices on how to best educate entrepreneurial students, which has led to everyone portraying the elephant from slightly different angles (Gartner, 2001). Two main angles, although intertwined, can be acknowledged when tracing the discussion backwards, which Ball (1989) described as a narrow approach of start-up entrepreneurialism and a broad approach seeking to develop enterprising individuals regardless of occupational path. The discourse of these two approaches has then been further developed and can be seen in the argued differences between enterprise and entrepreneurship education (e.g. Jones and Iredale, 2010), but then reconnected through the dual term of entrepreneurial education (Erkkilä, 2000).

To educate towards this versatile construct has both generated an enormous interest and public spending, but also much confusion on what it actually aspires to lead towards. To provide a potential consolidation between either being enterprising or being entrepreneurial, we bring forward the idea of wholeness from Palmer (1998) and the reasoning from Barnett (2004) that we are to educate students increasingly for living in time when they face an unknowable future (e.g. the decreased linearity of careers and the growing role of the gig-economy where short-term contracts and self-employment is creating more and more

demands for handling less stable and uncertain futures). [Barnett \(2004\)](#) acknowledges that there have always been degrees of uncertainty in society for the learner, but increasingly we see less order, stability and/or predictability in society. Compounding this issue, [Kegan \(1994, p. 7\)](#) notes that the mind of the adolescent is not yet matured, arguing that to gain authority over the information present in our chaotic surrounds, we must first embrace qualitative changes in our minds as well. Under such conditions, there is a need to appreciate the demands upon the learner's "consciousness on the one hand, and our mental capacities as" learners on the other hand.

Building on the dual nature of the phenomenon addressed as entrepreneurial education ([Erkkilä, 2000](#)), the current paper seeks to reconceptualize the strive for prudence (i.e. practical wisdom or phronesis) ([Thomson et al., 2004](#)) and more particularly the goal of developing prudent entrepreneurial self's regardless of whether one takes a narrow or a broad approach towards entrepreneurial education (e.g. [Ball, 1989](#)). Prudence is, in this paper, building on an Aristotelian view based on phronesis, which has later been discussed by Aquinas, being the one cardinal virtue encompassing past, present and conjecture forms of knowledge, central we argue, to the process of learning in unpredictable times. By conceptualizing the prudent entrepreneurial self, we aim to move away from the neoliberal caricature that has been the foundation for the enterprising self ([Foucault, 2008](#); [Rose, 1996](#)) and position being entrepreneurial as a disposition that could become morally and ethically good for society instead of its current individualistic and competitive social Darwinian connection ([Claeys, 2000](#); [Harvey, 1989, 2005](#)). Hence, we seek to re-focus the longstanding thought of education as a process involving both individuation and socialization (c.f. [Jung, 1921](#)), where both increased agency and social awareness are desirable, as we take care not to polarize between the individual and the collective as they are equally important in the educational journey that students embark on. The reasoning for seeking consolidation emanates from ideas on signature pedagogies ([Jones, 2019b](#); [Shulman, 2005](#)) and the interplay between domain-specific knowledge and domain-general abilities ([Geary et al., 2017](#); [Tricot and Sweller, 2014](#)) that in the end could lead to wholeness ([Palmer, 1998](#)) to prepare for an unknowable future ([Barnett, 2004](#)). We pose the following question guiding our problematization:

Why should we educate towards the prudent entrepreneurial self, and how can an understanding of individual agency in conjunction with a development of social awareness aid in the strive for prudence?

Throughout this paper, we will engage in a reconceptualization of the process to reach the development of prudence in students both in enterprising (broad) and entrepreneurship (narrow). Hence, our purpose with the paper is to provide an overriding goal of reaching a prudent entrepreneurial self, through re-conceptualizing prudence into the domain of entrepreneurial education, which can unite the two processes of becoming – enterprising and entrepreneurial. In the next section, we will provide a historical developmental viewpoint regarding progress of entrepreneurial education research and its dual past.

Literature review

To address the above processes that reside in the definition of entrepreneurial education, we will in the following sections discuss the basic foundations of how researchers have discussed how and what to teach when aiming to develop graduate entrepreneurs or enterprising graduates. Within this discussion, we depart from a narrow start-up perspective and the broader enterprise perspective and connect with the reasoning of [Barnett \(2004\)](#) on the importance of educating and developing educational processes that prepares for an unknowable future. After the discussion on the antecedents and their development, we delve

into a discussion building on [Palmer's \(1998\)](#) notion of wholeness by addressing six different poles of paradox that can be found in the research development under the broad umbrella of entrepreneurial education that instead of being extremes rather could be seen as complementary for the development of the individual learner *vis-à-vis* our envisioned prudent entrepreneurial self.

Developing graduate entrepreneurs and enterprising graduates

In this section, we will recap upon how research has portrayed the development of entrepreneurial education from both a narrow and a broad approach. We do not intend to make a systematic review of the field as that has been done by others in more density (c.f. [Hägg and Gabriellson, 2019](#); [Nabi et al., 2017](#); [Pittaway and Cope, 2007](#)). Instead, we use this part as a key to unlock the following poles of paradoxes. We do not take sides nor do we argue that one pole is unique for the narrow or broad approach as the intertwined discussion in the field warrants little determination of sides. However, to reach the poles of paradoxes, a brief account of the history is needed to contextualize the nature of current thinking in the field. We depart from the two related definitions laid forward by [Ball \(1989\)](#), pp. 6–7) where

the narrow approach perceives entrepreneurship as business entrepreneurialism and sees its promotion and development within education and training systems as an issue of curriculum development, enabling young people to learn, usually on an experiential basis, about business start-up and management. On the other hand, the broad approach sees enterprising as a group of qualities and competences that enable individuals, organizations, communities, societies and cultures to be flexible, creative and adaptable in the face of, and as contributors to, rapid social and economic change.

Within these two definitions there are differences that have been picked up by scholars and also similarities. For example, already in 1985 Robert Ronstadt termed teaching entrepreneurship as entrepreneurial education but given the circumstances and the time he was clearly addressing a narrow approach. Furthermore, in the reasoning of [Jones and Iredale \(2010\)](#), they separate entrepreneurship and enterprise education arguing that an enterprise is by nature more experiential, which following [Ball \(1989\)](#) would also lean on a narrow approach despite the explicit focus on enterprising pedagogy in Jones and Iredale's study. The intertwined relation between the narrow and the broad approach despite an attempt to separate the two has both decreased and increased over time, and there is no clear separation between the two, and perhaps the historical foundation of them being born through an understanding of how entrepreneurs behave and develop businesses ([Vesper, 1982](#)) as well as the behaviour of small business owners and the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess ([Gibb, 1987](#)) has too many similarities for creating distinct educational paths, despite continuous attempt in diversifying the two (e.g. [Jones and Iredale, 2010](#); [Neck and Corbett, 2018](#)).

More recently, entrepreneurial education has been viewed as relating to education and/or training programs ([Valerio et al., 2014](#)). In this approach, it is the anticipated application of knowledge and skills that organizes learning activities as being about entrepreneurship (i.e. education) or for the purpose of entrepreneurship (i.e. training). Such an approach assumes that the intentions of the learner can be known in advance, often a problematic assumption. Indeed, [Fayolle and Gailly \(2008\)](#) outlined several challenges unique to the field of entrepreneurial education. They argue that at the ontological and theoretical level, insufficient consensus exists as to what is entrepreneurship and discuss the pedagogical challenges that naturally flow from such a lack of agreement. Correspondingly, [Gibb \(2008\)](#) observed the field's development has resulted in "a veritable pot-pourri of activity delivered under the enterprise/entrepreneurship umbrella". Not surprisingly then, there are many different views present in the literature regarding what is the appropriate focus of

entrepreneurial education and what might actually constitute learning (or impact) in the field (Rideout and Gray, 2013).

In the absence of either mature pedagogical content knowledge (Magnusson *et al.*, 1999) and/or any accepted signature pedagogy (Shulman, 2005), the field has continued to drift in multiple directions to satisfy the diverse needs and wants of its various advocates (see Landström *et al.*, 2021 on the social structure of entrepreneurial education). As the reach of entrepreneurial education continues, the very legitimacy of the field is questioned (Fayolle *et al.*, 2016; Rideout and Gray, 2013), and the challenge of satisfying the requirements of multiple stakeholders (Jack and Anderson, 1999) increasingly threatens to become unsustainable. Just as the overarching field of entrepreneurship needed to come to grips with how its key characteristics are interpreted and combined (Gartner, 2001), it would seem logical for entrepreneurial education to address this issue as well. Doing so, would allow the field to contemplate 1) the different poles of paradox that divide us and 2) the validity of having the prudent entrepreneurial self as a unifying aim for all forms of entrepreneurial education.

Unlike Gartner's (2001) elephant that can be imagined as being comprised elements that in a tactile sense differ significantly (i.e. tail, trunk, ears, etc.), entrepreneurial education demonstrates a split personality. Narrowly, entrepreneurial education can be training for venture creation (Aulet, 2013), where actions are predicated on assumptions related to relatively unknown factors. In this context, decisions and actions for tomorrow are being made with the limited knowledge of today. The anticipated outcomes of action outweigh the opportunities to step back and reflect on one's own development. Nevertheless, in such a context, unpredictability can be traded-off against time to produce greater predictability (Fiet and Patel, 2008) through the use of systematic search methods that may offer increased protection from the realities of failure.

Conversely, more broadly, entrepreneurial education can be aligned with the progressive development of a person's knowledge, skills and capability use in unknown contexts (Jones, 2019a). Here, failure is an essential (and unavoidable) aspect of the educational experiences (QAA, 2018), offering at least the illusion of a coherent set of circumstances through which learning deepens (Beard and Wilson, 2002).

In both contexts, educational institutions place arbitrary timelines within which to assess learning that may or may not be related to the planned actions and actual learner experiences. Within these moments of time, the opportunity to unite entrepreneurial education with quantifiable learning outcomes is lost, as micro-outcomes, like intentions to start a potential business, are preferred over more holistic outcomes, such as the usefulness of knowledge developed (see Nabi *et al.*, 2017; Rideout and Gray, 2013 on the assessment discussion).

With direct reference to Fayolle and Gailly (2008), Fayolle (2018) speaks of the philosophical void that currently remains in the entrepreneurial education literature regarding what it means, and what are the roles of educators and students. We respond to Fayolle's challenge to consider society as the client of entrepreneurial education, viewing society also as Kegan (1994, p. 5) suggests, the provider of "the curriculum of modern life". Without an overarching purpose, entrepreneurial education would seem beholden to many masters, remaining fragmented at the didactical level in terms of who is its audience, what is its knowledge focus, which pedagogical methods are appropriate, which methods of assessment should be used and finally, what is the ultimate goal of entrepreneurial education?

From the above perspective, we can return to Barnett (2004) and view the nature of unknownness present in modern society, which is increasing in degree of magnitude by the day. Alternatively, perhaps our consciousness *vis-a-vis* the existence of an unknown world is only really awakening as technology provides increased access to our local and global surrounds. This leads to greater demands on the individual as they must not only adjust to

the demands of different societal changes but also how they as individuals can understand the personal ramifications of such change. Finally, the waves of change experienced in a single lifetime are seemingly more than any time in history (Barnett, 2004). The challenge that awaits the learner in today's society is to appreciate the gap between the abilities of one's mind relative to the challenges ever-present in the curriculum of modern life.

In the next section, we move beyond the dual nature of entrepreneurial education by positioning prudence as a potentially unifying element, drawing on the seminal work of Palmer (1998) to address six different poles of paradox present in both the entrepreneurial education literature and its related practice.

The dual nature of entrepreneurial education

Palmer (1998) notes the negative impact of either-or thinking in the educational literature, and we see this in entrepreneurial education literature. Palmer (1998, p. 67) addresses the need for wholeness in the following way:

The poles of a paradox are like the poles of a battery: hold them together, and they generate the energy of life; pull them apart, and the current stops flowing. When we separate any of the profound paired truths of our lives, both poles become lifeless spectres of themselves — and we become lifeless as well.

By exploring the ever-present contradictions in the literature, the aim of entrepreneurial education and its intended outcomes and methods, we can identify several noncontroversial paradoxes that we instead could view from an “and” perspective rather than an “either-or” perspective.

- (1) Entrepreneurial education should develop students for individual *and* collective contexts.
- (2) Entrepreneurial education should support student development *and* value creation.
- (3) Entrepreneurial education should be slow *and* fast.
- (4) Entrepreneurial education should embrace failure *and* protect from failure.
- (5) Entrepreneurial education should focus on education *and* training.
- (6) Entrepreneurial education should accommodate today *and* tomorrow.

Paradox 1. Entrepreneurial education should develop students for individual and collective contexts. Building on the work of Jung (1921) as well as Bandura (2006), we see individuation and agency as paramount in the process of educational development and strive for a prudent state in the long run. However, and as Aristotle tells us, to be prudent, an ability to look backwards on a life of deeds and decisions taken in a social context is required. Therefore, and as Bandura (2006) argues, we do not live our life in individual autonomy, but we are constantly making transactions (Dewey, 1938; Itin, 1999) in a collective environment that continually rewrites the “curriculum of modern life” (Kegan, 1994, p. 5). Further, as Bruyat and Julien (2001) note, entrepreneurship occurs through a series of interactive dialogic relations, and as such, it makes no sense to restrict our approach only to the development of the individual. Even at the cognitive level, gains from collaboration are possible when the collective working memories of many outweigh the learning capabilities of the individual when facing complex problems that go beyond the individual capacity (Sweller *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, in line with Cranton (2000), we see a central goal of entrepreneurial education as being “the development of the person as separate from the collective, which in turn allows for the person to join with others in a more authentic union”. Authentic in the sense that one's capacity to contribute to the collective is governed by their authenticity developed

individually, where one's shadow is understood via critical self-reflection, enabling the further development of one's individual consciousness (see Hägg, 2021); a prerequisite for productive behaviour in collective contexts (Sharp, 1995).

Paradox 2. Entrepreneurial education should support student development and value creation. The development of value creating abilities requires the development of individual abilities bound to both domain-specific knowledge (Tricot and Sweller, 2014) and generic skills (Dillenbourg, 1999; Jaques and Salmon, 2007) tied to domain-general abilities for learners to engage in developing entrepreneurial competencies. Here we follow the definition of competencies addressed by Hager and Gonczi (1996), being the bundle of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes related to occupational tasks or activities. Domain-specific knowledge is defined as “memorised information that can lead to action permitting specified task completion over indefinite periods of time” (Tricot and Sweller, 2014, p. 266) stored in long-term memory, whilst domain-general abilities are tied to intelligence and the capacity of working memory (Geary et al., 2017). In their study on mathematics achievement, Geary et al. (2017) found that domain-specific knowledge and domain-general abilities play equal important roles for learning in education as learners mature.

Following Geary et al. (2017), we argue entrepreneurial education also needs to support the simultaneous development of domain-specific knowledge and domain-general abilities as they work in tandem to create depth in a domain (be that entrepreneurship or medicine for example). As an illustration, Table 1 portrays how we see the movement and also different attention between entrepreneurship as a narrow process and enterprising as a broad process when it comes to its focus on either domain-specific knowledge or domain-general abilities. The table addresses four types of potential graduates. The traditional employee that has undertaken traditional education where little practical activities can be acknowledged (see e.g. Gibb, 1987) where the outcome is an intermediate level of both specific knowledge and general abilities. We have the entrepreneur or medical doctor who through the practice-based approach of learning has developed a high level of domain-specific knowledge (e.g. Neck and Corbett, 2018), but less attention has been put on developing the individual as a self leading to an intermediate level of development. Then we have the enterprising graduate where the focus has been high on the self and more generic skills and domain-general abilities (see e.g. Jones and Iredale, 2010), but not as high on domain-specific knowledge. Finally, we have the prudent entrepreneurial self that seeks to consolidate the two to develop both individual agency and social awareness, which follows the continuing calls for taking both an

Domain-general abilities (high)	Enterprising graduate	Prudent entrepreneurial self
	Traditional employee	Entrepreneurial graduate (or being a medical doctor)
Domain-general abilities (intermediate)	Domain-specific knowledge (intermediate)	Domain-specific knowledge (high)

Table 1.
Four types of potential graduates

ontological view and an integrated perspective on what the potential outcomes of entrepreneurial education might be (e.g. Fayolle, 2018; Fayolle and Gailly, 2008; Kyrö, 2015; Pittaway and Cope, 2007).

Building on the narrow view on entrepreneurship (with a high focus on domain-specific knowledge), educating student entrepreneurs is not a matter of neglecting the creation of value as it is inherent in the process of venture creation (Bruyat and Julien, 2001), but equal focus should be put on developing domain-general abilities at the individual level to prepare them for value creation activities that move beyond the narrow capitalistic function that an entrepreneur has come to be viewed as (Lackéus, 2017). Here, it is important to consider that a broad view of enterprising is not solely focused on developing enterprising graduates that possess generic skills and domain-general abilities destined to create value in society, but of equal importance is it to foster domain-specific knowledge (in the profession one is aiming for) to develop competencies for generating authentic value creation abilities in society. As acknowledged in the definition by Hager and Gonczi (1996), to develop competencies there needs to be a connection to occupational tasks or activities and being enterprising in regard to a broad approach does not self-evidently create value as there needs to be a connection to a domain where value can be created, captured and delivered.

Paradox 3. Entrepreneurial education should be slow and fast. The inherent complexity and opportunity speculation/evaluation requires students to take “leaps of faith” and act on instinct/belief and to also stop and take stock of what influences their cognitive processing of information. Relative to other economic actors, the entrepreneur is not always assumed to be a rational decision-maker, with the influence of cognitive bias (see Busenitz, 1999; Kihlstrom and Laffont, 1979) often a problematic issue. Within the narrow view of entrepreneurship, students are afforded opportunities to act on impulse, for example, when developing a business plan and/or idea for pitching. Rarely are their underlying cognitive biases removed from this process of imaginative speculation. Instead, any such biases are carried forward into the final artefact because in reality, they often do not matter. They do not matter because the learning outcome was focused on learning how to write a business plan not actually creating a business; therefore, the risk is not real. Alternatively, in the broader view of entrepreneurship, discovering the presence of cognitive biases is a legitimate learning outcome (Jones, 2019a), critically important to the development of the appropriate cognitive architecture (Sweller *et al.*, 2011) necessary to develop situational awareness of their immediate environment (Endsley, 1995). In the former (narrower) context, there is typically an assumed time pressure associated with the plasticity of the student’s idea (a course or program that assumes business generation in just a couple of weeks). Conversely, in the later (broader) context, there is no assumed timeframe for the application of ideas, and the primary focus is on the student’s brain plasticity (Jones, 2013). In terms of supporting a student’s capability for entrepreneurial behaviour, it would seem obvious that a compromise is needed. Entrepreneurial education should always support the development of student capability as it relates to current and future circumstances by developing the cognitive architecture for value creation and/or the capacity to embrace unknown futures (Barnett, 2004). This can only be achieved through addressing different (but interrelated) learning outcomes. The educator contributes a range of known (general) needs but must respond *in situ* to the student’s unknown (immediate) needs (Tyler, 1949). The tempo of entrepreneurial education should therefore be dependent upon the time required to confirm and/or develop the required cognitive architecture to achieve a balance between the learner’s general and immediate needs, using frequent reflection on various experiences to shape one’s understanding of speculated and actual life (Broadhead and Gregson, 2018).

Paradox 4. Entrepreneurial education should embrace failure and protect from failure. Dewey notes there is as much to be learned from success as failure, but entrepreneurial education needs to equally ensure students can protect themselves from psychological and

financial loss. [Palmer \(1998\)](#) addresses this paradox between the “hospitable and charged” to embrace both security (that an educational process has a destination) and uncertainty (that is bound to the educational process of discovering new worlds). In this sense, we could think of entrepreneurial education as embracing two complementary arrows, one that moves students via exposure to uncertain experiences ([Dewey, 1910](#)) from less to more differentiated, using failure throughout the learning process as a selection mechanism to guide this development. However, we can also envision an arrow that aligns to the development of increasing awareness of one’s surrounds. One’s ability to transverse these simultaneous developmental pathways is dependent upon the deliberate embrace of failure as both an internal feedback mechanism and an external event to be minimized. These two complementary worlds have often been seen as problematic for the phenomenon of entrepreneurship when moving it inside the walls of higher education. As entrepreneurship is bound to uncertainty, it has been argued not to go well with the process of education ([Neck and Greene, 2011](#)). However, this is only a valid argument if one sees formal education as the final destination of the learning journey. Instead, we argue that the (formal) educational process is only one part of one’s learning journey towards prudence; although the process is highly predictable, the disclosing of new worlds ([Barnett, 2004](#)) to students provides various educative entrepreneurial experiences full of uncertainty and potential learning from failures. However, despite that failure occurs, they are embraced and supported by the guidance of the facilitator, implying that the students gain knowledge on how to respond to failure ([Shepherd, 2004](#)) and thereby gain security from the educational process that has an end goal in sight.

Paradox 5. Entrepreneurial education should focus on education and training. Students need to learn why certain competencies are important and the cognitive architecture required (i.e. metacognition) and be trained to be competent and assessed via appropriate tasks. Appropriate “tasks” span the specific to the general and must be identified for each competence (e.g. [Fayolle and Gailly, 2008](#); [Gibb, 1993](#); [Kyrö, 2015](#); [Neck and Greene, 2011](#)). In this, we follow [Palmer’s \(1998\)](#) argumentation for a subject-centred education that unites the teacher and the students in the educational process and the river metaphor from [Roberts \(2015\)](#) implying that we never enter the same context as the temporal dynamics are ever mutating. Hence, we need training of the specific as well as education of the specific, whilst also acknowledging that we need training of the generic and education of the generic. However, while it will be different depending on the focus of the education, taking a broad or a narrow approach, both education and training are equally important to reach the prudent entrepreneurial self. The prudent entrepreneurial self develops their good judgement as an identifier and solver of problems or opportunities not merely from deliberating about their education but also through experiencing and reflecting on their continuous training as a novice.

Paradox 6. Entrepreneurial education should accommodate today and tomorrow. The current interests of today’s students can provide the effort and direction of their learning (i.e. their immediate needs). The unknown challenges of tomorrow await the prudent entrepreneurial self, and their general (future) needs may relate less to knowledge received today than from capability developed today, implying the interplay between knowledge, skills, judgemental abilities and attitudes (see e.g. [Gibb, 2008](#); [Hägg, 2021](#); [Jones, 2019a](#)). Entrepreneurial education should act as a circuit breaker, helping students to understand how today is shaped by yesterday, and how tomorrow most likely has already been shaped by today (e.g. [Hägg and Kurczewska, 2020](#); [Jones, 2019b](#); [Neck and Corbett, 2018](#)). [Dewey \(1946, p. 35\)](#) referred to this as the *experiential continuum* where “every experience both takes something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after”. Developing an awareness of how our habits of mind are unconsciously transferred between time periods is very important and is central to the prudent entrepreneurial self having knowledge and capabilities related to their past, present and

future (see [Aquinas, 1915](#), Vol. 2.1.2). [Veblen \(1922, p. 192\)](#) observed that “the evolution of society is substantially a process of mental adaptation on the part of individuals under the stress of circumstances which will no longer tolerate habits of thought formed under and conforming to a different set of circumstances in the past”. It is not enough for our students to be aware of changes in their immediate surrounds, they must also be capable of adjusting their inner relations to their outer relations; this is the dynamic of *today and tomorrow* that matters most and is dependent upon personal development through increased levels of consciousness ([Kegan, 1994](#)). [Maturana and Varela \(1980\)](#) refer to the process of autopoiesis as simultaneously *being* and *becoming*, with [Rose \(1997\)](#) noting that such a process of growth is dependent upon the presence of *order* (or stability). This suggests that for entrepreneurial education to be able to support the development of students (for today and tomorrow), there is a need to identify the forms of *order*, such as our students’ sense of self, through which sustainable growth is possible.

The role of prudence in making entrepreneurial education wholesome

Moving forward in our problematization towards the prudent entrepreneurial self, in this section, we build on Palmer’s notion of “wholesome” and its relationship to Dewey’s moral theory and Aquinas’ conceptualization of prudence. Building on these streams of thinkers supported by contemporary insights from cognitive load theory and evolutionary educational psychology allow us to propose prudence as a uniting capability that can bring both sides of the entrepreneurial education equation into a “whole”, where the destination is the prudent entrepreneurial self. Building also on recent interest in the role of wisdom in entrepreneurial education (e.g. [Hägg and Kurczewska, 2016](#); [Johannisson, 2016](#); [Jones, 2019a](#); [McNally et al., 2018](#)), our approach aims to further explore the historical nature of prudence. In doing so, we see the prudent entrepreneurial self as not one specific persona hence, it is not about trying to inflict a form of power abuse, which delimits freedom [1] implicitly by creating a utopian vision of how all citizens should be calibrated. Instead, it is an adaptable construct, compatible with [Jung’s \(1921\)](#) individuation through which individuals can enhance their individual self through differentiation and thereby magnify their inherent differences to develop self-awareness and self-responsibility when making acts in uncertain conditions. Hence, the prudent entrepreneurial self is neither just the acting graduate entrepreneur nor just an enterprising graduate. There is no ideal archetype as the prudent entrepreneurial self comes in as many shapes as there are different individuals (see [Schunk, 2012](#) on the idea of individualization in education). However, the path towards it consists both of orderly structures and individual differences that collectively underwrite one’s ability to explore the tension points between past and future possibilities ([Broadhead and Gregson, 2018](#)). In the sense of [Damerow \(1988\)](#), who builds upon [Vygotsky \(1978\)](#), our focus is centred on the development of the required cognitive architecture (for prudent behaviour) rather than trying to pinpoint other specific endpoints. In the following sections, we will build up an argument for this destination (although the endpoint is not an end in itself but most likely a starting point for the continuing journey of adulthood) as a uniting outcome for entrepreneurial education, starting with discussing what prudence implies and why (often) it takes precedence over the other cardinal virtues, which is followed by a discussion on the eight forms of knowledge that comprises prudence.

What does prudence imply and why prudence over the other three cardinal virtues?

Before addressing what prudence implies, there is reason to also briefly address why prudence and not any of the other three cardinal virtues are of specific importance for entrepreneurial education. Aquinas discusses four cardinal virtues, justice, temperance, fortitude and prudence, noting that prudence alone is the directing principle of the other three virtues. The definition of

moral virtue states that it is “a habit of choosing the rational mean, and as a prudent man [2] would define it” (Aquinas, 1915, p. 112). Prudence is a complex intellectual virtue that is interrelated with justice, temperance and fortitude (Broadhead and Gregson, 2018). In this sense, prudence acts as a “centring” process (see Richards, 1989), where, just like with the potter’s wheel, life is shaped through contemplating how our actions in life wobble, become distorted and ultimately find shape through accommodating ambiguity (Hart, 2001). Throughout this process, prudence creates questions of oneself that shape our position *vis-a-vis* justice, temperance and fortitude. The application of prudence to entrepreneurial education also allows us to contemplate that “the purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to the world – not to impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition of the individual himself” (Merton, 1979, p. 3). This requirement for self-exploration through open-ended questioning enables prudence to align neatly to Jung’s (1921) process of individuation within which one’s vocational calling is also discovered through self-dialogue (Sharp, 1995).

Is wisdom acquired or learned?

Hart (2001, p. 117) argues that “we do not possess wisdom, as if it were an object; instead, we act wisely”. In much the same vein, Lawson (1961, p. vii) states that “wisdom lies in human action which possesses both intellectual and ethical orientation; and the promotion of such wisdom is the task of education”. While a long life of experience (Thomson *et al.*, 2004) is logically associated with the development of prudence, Broadhead and Gregson (2018) highlight the basis upon which the components of Aquinas’ prudence (in Table 2) can be incorporated into a curriculum (see also Aquinas, 1915, pp. 97–99). Our central thesis is that a likely by-product of successfully nurturing an “and” approach (rather than either-or) is the holistic development of entrepreneurial graduates capable of prudent behaviour. In the sense that an entrepreneur is always rooted to three distinct worlds (i.e. the past, the present and the future), there is a direct benefit to students who develop the (interrelated) capabilities of prudence. Importantly, this approach also neatly echoes the logic of Dewey’s (1946) experiential continuum where past life experience is incorporated into the process of learning about our current and future experiences. Therefore, we argue that entrepreneurial students will especially benefit from acquiring the eight capabilities associated with prudence due to their future mental needs being aligned (simultaneously) to three distinct worlds, which we can now consider the temporal nature of.

Aquinas noted three specific time contexts for prudence. First, knowledge which has *past* (Memoria and Intelligentia) or what remains in our memory, so understanding and intelligence; second, knowledge which is being acquired, so the *present* (Docilitas, Solertia and Ratio) and third, knowledge of the future in form of conjecture (Providentia, Circumspecto and Cautio). These eight specific capabilities can be logically reconciled to the underlying behaviour of being entrepreneurial *vis-a-vis* the tasks associated with value creation. Given the inherent unpredictability of attempting to create new value, the development of mental abilities that reduce the possibilities of past experiences being rendered “mis-educative” (Dewey, 1946) and naturally increasing the precision of trial-and-error learning, ensuring more past experiences are educative *vis-a-vis* future actions. In both the narrow start-up sense and broad enterprising approach, collectively, the eight parts of prudence hold the potential (Huang, 2015) to increase the efficacy of entrepreneurial actions by contributing to the development of guidance routines (Nelson and Winter, 1982), increasing one’s awareness and understanding of past experiences relative to future actions (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974) and reducing overconfidence (Busenitz and Barney, 1997) as it applies to estimating both supply and demand possibilities as they are related to consumer behaviour and all critical factors for nascent entrepreneurs and enterprising graduates.

Parts of prudence and phases	The person of prudence has the capacity to	Entrepreneurial advantages gained through prudence
<i>1. Knowledge of the past</i>		
Memoria	Remember past events accurately so that they can learn from experience	The potential value of personal heuristics increases as personal experience and observations feed more accurate information into initial planning for future entrepreneurial actions
Intelligentia	Understand “the first basis from which a thing is known” or use common sense	
<i>2. Knowledge of the present</i>		
Docilitas	Be open-minded to recognize the wide variety of situations to be experienced	The establishment of “guidance” routines through which to avoid the over influence of overconfidence on estimations of supply and demand, costs and consumer behaviour
Solertia	Be quick-witted where they can size up a situation quickly and identify an appropriate course of action	
Ratio	Research and compare various possibilities	
<i>3. Knowledge of conjecture</i>		
Providentia	See the possible consequences of actions and estimate how well a course of action would fulfil a goal	The reduction of overconfidence has the potential to introduce greater caution when speculating future returns and evaluating risks associated future entrepreneurial actions
Circumspecto	Take all the circumstances of a particular situation into account	
Cautio	Plan to act cautiously in order to mitigate possible risks	

Table 2. The eight parts of prudence and its temporal implications for knowledge

Discussion – how to develop the prudent entrepreneurial self?

Following the previous section on the dual nature of entrepreneurial education where we have focused the discussion on “and’s” instead of “either-or”, we will, in conceptualizing the prudent entrepreneurial self, interweave the six *and’s* together with the eight types of knowledge and its temporal phases, where the first *and* acts as a guide based on the vertical development of agency (individuation) and the horizontal development of order (social awareness), as seen in Figure 1. As we have pointed out in previous sections, our approach does not entertain a game of the winner takes it all; rather, we seek to contribute to a game of thoughtfulness, appreciating the many opposite brilliant ideas that various scholars have developed over time on how to educate not only enterprising graduates or entrepreneurial graduates but also how to develop curiosity and a willingness to learn and take responsibility for one’s learning process in a generic sense. From all these wise arguments, of which we cannot take any credit of being the inventors, we rather seek to contribute with an invigorated synthesis and perhaps slightly innovative, re-construction of what prudence implies in the educational context for the 21st century.

Building further on paradox one is the idea of order as a rudder that while invisible, nevertheless steers the ship towards its next destination. It is what Dewey (1946) would call the continuity aspect bound to the development of a process of educative experiences rather than the mis- or uneducated experiences that can be a potential outcome without order in how to reach a final destination, in our case the prudent entrepreneurial self. On the other hand,

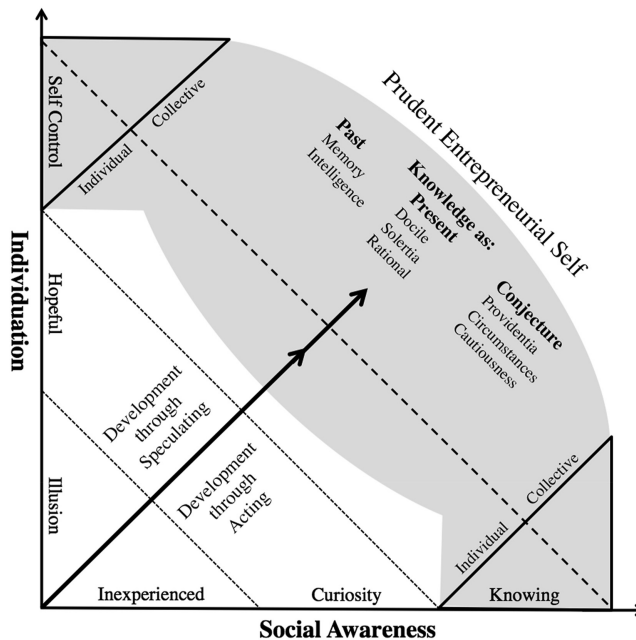


Figure 1.
A proposed schema for developing the prudent entrepreneurial self

there is agency which represents the inbound uncertainty in anything that we engage in, building on the four properties, intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2006). Agency provides the students with a context of what-if scenarios that constantly change as the contextual development mutates. However, this is not the same as arguing that there are no established educational artifacts that we are to dismiss (Geary, 2007), the order of things still matters (Comenius, 1967).

In this sense, agency and order are the logical epiphenomena of individuation and social awareness, where social awareness represents the horizontal axis and informs the learner (and teacher) of personal progress towards new destinations (see Figure 1). Individuation represents the vertical axis, related to the conscious awakening (Kegan, 1994) of the student, their basis for differentiation and divestment of illusionary views and greater self-control, i.e. agency. Figure 1 below therefore consists of three parts, the arrow in the middle that addresses past, present and conjecture forms of knowledge, the horizontal axis portraying the journey of social awareness and finally the vertical axis that portrays the development of individuation as a learner, as discussed in paradoxes one and six. Together the three parts seek to create guidance towards the development of a schema that could underpin the prudent entrepreneurial self.

Past, present and conjecture forms of entrepreneurial knowledge

Figure 1 portrays the development of a schema in the terminology of cognitive load theory (Sweller, 2016), which centres on how to develop the various types of knowledge that Aquinas connected to prudence (the arrow in the middle). In this connection, past forms of knowledge are not seen as redundant, for example the neglect of the business plan component and the move towards the pitching deck and other more lean or agile views. Consistent with paradoxes two and three, here we want to stress that past knowledge, what we actually remember when all details have vanished, actually plays a very important role in building up

what Sweller *et al.* (2011) address as a schema in long-term memory. Without the basic factual domain-specific knowledge (which could be whatever depending on what target that is aimed for), there is nothing that the mind can reconnect with when facing present forms of knowledge. Oftentimes, we address this present type of knowledge either as knowing (Dewey, 1930) or procedural knowledge manifested through the skills acquired to perform certain tasks or activities (Alexander *et al.*, 1991), which in a narrow start-up approach would imply issues, like pitching an idea, engaging in commercial activities, opportunity recognition and exploitation, etc. However, neither of these two forms, past or present, will move a student towards a prudent entrepreneurial self. To move in that direction (as noted in paradox five), which might take years and years as Aristotle reminded us already a couple of thousands of years ago (Thomson *et al.*, 2004), we also need to engage in the conjecture form of knowledge as per paradox six that bears similarities to present ideas on conditional knowledge (Alexander *et al.*, 1991) as a state of knowing when, why and for what reasons one ought to act in a specific manner in given situations. In the entrepreneurial world, it would imply the ability to make judgements on right and wrong, falling closely to the idea laid forward by Dewey (1891) on moral practice, where the aim is for individuals to engage in intelligent action. The eight forms of knowledge that are ingrained in the idea of prudence through its three parts are by no means a simple and straightforward endeavour. But, through seeing entrepreneurial education as wholesome in the spirit of Palmer (1998), there are six different *and's* that in conjunction might play different roles to develop in our view, a reachable entrepreneurial schema that provides a baseline to act in a prudent entrepreneurial way. From the arrow in Figure 1, we then move to the vertical and horizontal axes that provide different inputs for how to develop the eight different forms of knowledge that makes up the prudent entrepreneurial self.

A journey of social awareness

From the horizontal axis (see Figure 1), we see the possibility of enhanced social awareness linked to higher levels of knowing. From Comenius (1967), we learn that we plant the seed of knowledge in the individual and provide a broad scope of subject knowledge, but we cannot know which branch that each student will pay particular interest to and develop depth within. Hence, educating towards the prudent entrepreneurial self is not solely a matter of providing a specific subject matter where everyone will deep dive in the same specific area, but instead an orderly process that provides the necessary tools (skills not only to take action but also abilities to judge situation through developing the reflective ability, as well as forming attitudes on how to create value for the broader scope of society, *vis-a-vis* paradoxes two and five) to aid both the enterprising graduate and the entrepreneurial student in the journey from an inexperienced state to being increasingly curious, and eventually, knowing, in the sense of becoming temporally an expert *vis-a-vis* the task at hand (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1988). We do not argue that each individual will require all steps, and they might never move through the steps completely, but developing the seeds for a capacity for prudence also creates within the learner abilities of self-awareness and self-determination to take control over their continuing life-long journey as a learner.

This solo journey to an unknown destination whilst in the company of others seems in and of its self, a contradiction. However, and as discussed in paradoxes one and six, when viewed through the lens of constructive alignment (Biggs and Tang, 2011), it represents a journey already imagined. Biggs developed his constructive alignment approach by extending the prior work of Tyler (1949) and doing so accommodated the possibility of that each individual student's immediate needs (as learning objectives) could act as a compass to enable the navigation of one's own learning journey across all three time perspectives encompassed in prudence (i.e. past, present and future). Once operationalized as an individual-level construct

(Biggs, 2017), the process of constructive alignment is supportive of any such individual growth trajectories. Through such a process, the development of the prudent entrepreneurial self would require the development of an individual learner agreement where learning outcomes, learning activities and methods of assessment are (in part) developed *ex ante*. In turn, this requires an appreciation of the different roles for the student (i.e. different levels of responsibility of the learning process) and educator (i.e. a movement between the teacher, guide and facilitator of learning experiences) *vis-a-vis* the interplay between pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy (see Hägg and Kurczewska, 2019; Jones *et al.*, 2014).

A development of individuation as a learner

Movement up the vertical axis is tied inextricably to movement along the horizontal axis. As our student becomes curious of the world's curriculum, so does the possibility of deeper introspection. Viewed as transformative learning (Cranton, 2000), agency emerges as the epiphenomena of developing the cognitive architecture (Vygotsky, 1978) required for prudent behaviour; rather than trying to pinpoint other specific endpoints, we factor in the likely delayed progression (Jones, 2019a) that students of entrepreneurship will make towards authentic start-up activities, as per paradoxes three and five. We advocate a need to support the student to move from misperceiving the world (i.e. illusion) to developing within them hope about their ability to journey into unknown worlds (Barnett, 2004) and to do so with their "fidelity to the law of one's own being" (Sharp, 1995, p. 48) driving the development of self-control, where paradox four becomes important to be able to face uncertainty through a clear educational process. In addition to embracing Kegan's (1994) arguments to move students from an instrumental mind to one capable of self-authoring and self-transforming, this approach builds on the reasoning behind cognitive load theory and the importance of developing a basic understanding of a subject before venturing off into constructing new destinations. Hence, when addressing the extremes of enterprising and entrepreneurship, consistent with QAA (2018), we can acknowledge a difference in the subject matter, where entrepreneurship has a clear context in mind (being more domain-specific), and enterprising is more blurred (being more domain-general), whilst enterprising has a long-term focus of developing capabilities (i.e. metacognition), entrepreneurship is less future oriented through its high focus on methods and tools despite being contextualized in an uncertain environment. In embracing Palmer's (1998) wholeness approach, and as discussed in paradox one, we view the development of the prudent entrepreneurial self as occurring alongside the student's journey towards individuation (Jung, 1921); a journey through which Bandura's (2006) four core properties of human agency (i.e. intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness) are essential to ensuring learning experiences are truly educative and not mis-educative (Dewey, 1946).

In summary, through the unification of six different poles of paradox found in the broad umbrella of entrepreneurial education, we envisage the possibility of the prudent entrepreneurial self. We view this initial outline of the prudent entrepreneurial self as a potential blueprint for the nature of required change in cognitive architecture for such a schema. While acknowledging the challenge of such development, we identify the logical components and processes for such learner development. Through combining three distinct forms of temporal knowledge with specific pathways for personal and social development, we outline a plausible learning journey towards the prudent entrepreneurial self.

Conclusion

Throughout the entire paper, we have sought to move away from the extreme arguments that separates two basically intertwined processes of learning and instead addressed the idea of

Palmer's wholeness, which in a way balance on the scale the idea of Aristotle (see [Thomson et al., 2004](#)) that indulging in too much of one-sided effects can in prolongation create negative ripple effects. Neither view is optimizing the interplay so long sought for in the educational process of the interplay between socialization and individuation (e.g. Jung, Rorty). In the introduction, we asked the following question: Why should we educate towards the prudent entrepreneurial self, and how can an understanding of individual agency in conjunction with a development of social awareness aid in the strive for prudence?

Through the discussion and problematization of the paper, we have addressed the dual question posed. The presented overarching goal of educating towards the prudent entrepreneurial self is an attempt to respond to the various calls made by many prominent scholars in the field, such as finding legitimacy, a philosophical anchor and some common ground that distinguish entrepreneurial education from other types of education (e.g. [Béchar and Grégoire, 2005](#); [Fayolle, 2013](#); [Gibb, 1993](#); [Jack and Anderson, 1999](#); [Johannisson, 2016](#); [Kyrö, 2015](#); [Neck and Corbett, 2018](#); [Pittaway and Cope, 2007](#)). But still acknowledging that we are in fact standing on the shoulders of giants when it comes to scholarly work in philosophy and education that has laid the groundwork for the synthesized ideas brought forward in this paper ([Barnett, 2004](#); [Dewey, 1946](#); [Palmer, 1998](#); [Sweller et al., 2011](#); [Thomson et al., 2004](#); [Vygotsky, 1978](#)).

Implicit in our thinking has been the idea that a deeper consideration of the educational and psychological literature will be required to further advance the notion of the prudent entrepreneurial self. For example, the dual process of being able to understand one's self and immediate surrounds, so critically important to entrepreneurial action cannot be learned through an accumulation of inert facts and benign experiences. Until the modern life of our students is viewed as the curriculum that must be mastered by an ever-evolving adult mind ([Kegan, 1994](#), p. 5), our students, driven by their youthful optimism more often than not, will end up "in over their heads".

The first authentic step towards our notion of the prudent entrepreneurial self therefore requires the development of a particular pedagogical approach that can facilitate student learning as "an ontological turn" ([Barnett, 2004](#), p. 247), so that learning for an unknown future means that learning is centred on change in oneself and "change in one's relationship to the world". Taking medical education as a way to illustrate the envisioned process, we see a processual development of the prudent entrepreneurial self as a potential cure in handling or coping with uncertainty that is not only a temporary treatment, which might be the cause of overly focusing on domain-specific knowledge, like in the upper left box of [Table 1](#), or if one takes a too high emphasis on the generic skills and domain-general abilities, as both parts are of equal value for the continuous learning process. Hence, following the argument of [Barnett \(2004\)](#), a main contribution to educate students through entrepreneurial education that seeks to develop prudent entrepreneurial self's is to prepare them for existing in an unknowable future, a future that previously (from an anthropological perspective) was much more certain and linear than what we see today. Hence, preparing graduates is a matter of prudence, involving past, present and conjecture forms of knowledge that we find in the interplay between individuation and social awareness.

The implementation of such a pedagogical approach would surely be onerous, but we argue necessary to realize the lofty expectations of entrepreneurial education in contemporary society. Optimistically, we increasingly view much of the new thinking in the entrepreneurial education community as potential bricks being laid in relation to the required scholarship of teaching and learning that could move the needle (in our [Figure 1](#)) towards the centre and beyond, as required to develop the knowledgeable prudent entrepreneurial self. We see such ideas not as an individualistic pursuit by each scholar but a co-creation where each part is needed and valued in its wholeness. And, hopefully we are not feeling the different parts of the elephant, but instead start to realize how each brick

together create the picture of the elephant, and how to leverage the uniqueness each component contributes when embracing difference as a positive force than as limiting.

Implications for research and practice

In part, our optimism derives from our recognition that in comparison to other domains of education (i.e. medicine, law, arts, engineering, etc.), entrepreneurial education is still very young, both in terms of practice, scholarship and policy settings. When we step back and consider the significant confluence of practice, scholarship and most importantly, the external policy settings that have shaped other fields of education, such as medicine (c.f. [Geffen, 2014](#); [Gourevitch, 1999](#)), we can envision the required evolution of our field in ways that could underwrite the development of the prudent entrepreneurial self. Nevertheless, we accept that scholars of entrepreneurial education will not naturally converge upon the prudent entrepreneurial self as a logical educational outcome, such is the current diversity of thought and opinion globally. Therefore, we join with [Fayolle \(2013\)](#), viewing the future of entrepreneurial learning as being directly related to (1) evidencing the usefulness and effectiveness of entrepreneurial education, (2) meeting the social and economic needs of multiple societal stakeholders and (3) the formation of a professional community of educators and researchers with similar values and objectives.

Just as in the evolution of other fields of education (and especially so given the growing importance of entrepreneurial learning), we see a need for action by educators, researchers and policy-makers that recognizes the importance of ensuring that our pedagogical practices are more informed by advances in education and psychology to build legitimacy gained from the nature of student learning outcomes associated with entrepreneurial education.

Finally, from an educational perspective the paper brings at least two practical implications. First, through emphasizing an overarching thought to educate towards prudence regardless of if one aspires to educate entrepreneurs or enterprising individuals provides a steppingstone to prepare for the unknowable future. Hence, with a mutating world of work, where calls to adjust towards a less linear career perspective is becoming more and more a norm, being able to cope or in some degrees handle and live with uncertainty is of immanent importance both presently and for the future. In outlining the nature of the prudent entrepreneurial self, we essentially are seeking to align entrepreneurial education to a “pedagogy for an unknown future” ([Barnett, 2004](#), p. 76), thereby increasing its potential value to society. Second, our framework provides a potential blueprint on how to both acknowledge individuation and the development of agency in conjunction with the importance of developing social awareness for being able to adapt to the context one is present within. To aid in this interplay, we employ the eight forms of knowledge that together provide opportunities to plan and develop learning activities that can nudge learners toward the development of entrepreneurial prudence. We do not argue that this is easy nor that we are the first to address these various forms of knowledge in the field, but we provide a potentially overarching schema as to how to move towards wholeness ([Palmer, 1998](#)) and revitalize the thoughts laid out by [Aquinas \(1915\)](#) to develop learners on the path towards becoming prudent entrepreneurial selfs.

Notes

1. In this, we depart from the Nietzschean democrat where any form of government must be subjected to analysis and critique based on a will on not to be dominated ([Flyvbjerg, 2001](#)).
2. Man is here referred to the human being regardless of gender.

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