Entrepreneurship education - paradoxes in school-company interaction

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship education is seen as a tool to solve many problems of today, for example, the high youth unemployment rate, lack of entrepreneurial mindset and skills, the need for new companies and national urge for business growth, to name a few. Therefore, entrepreneurship education (EE) and its promotion have gained ground in education, both at the policy level and in research. (Ruskovaara and Pihkala, 2014; Bacigalupo et al., 2016; European Commission, 2015; 2018). However, although increasing efforts have been made on the research and promotion of EE, the adoption of EE has been slower than expected (Ruskovaara, 2014).

Earlier research has shown that principals and teachers have difficulties in following the expectations of curricula (Hämäläinen et al., 2018; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010). In this paper, we suggest that teachers’ difficulties can partly be understood in terms of paradoxes they face in their work (Dea, 2016; Greenglass et al, 2003; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Lewis, 2000). Some of the paradoxes are evident: in some schools, entrepreneurship education is part of the school’s activity, while others do not appreciate entrepreneurship in their school programmes. One of the large paradoxes is related to the school’s cooperation with companies. For example, Billett (2002) states that the school is, in principle, a place for learning, while several researchers (Gibb, 2011; Jones and Iredale, 2010; Neck and Greene, 2011; Pittaway et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2006; Sommarström et al., 2017) claim that cooperation with companies could provide students with a more realistic picture of entrepreneurship and working life. In earlier studies, Jones and Iredale (2010) and Sommarström et al. (2017) have pointed out that despite the centrality of school-company cooperation in EE, it has remained clearly understudied.

For professional teachers, insolvable paradoxes may have multiple negative psychological and cognitive effects: they may cause anxiety, doubts of their own efficacy, distress, decommitment and detachment of expected teaching activities (Ball, 2003; Barraket, 2005; Lewis, 2000). In addition, earlier research on educational reforms has shown that teachers may feel politically and professionally vulnerable in their working communities (Foliard et al., 2018; Kelchtermans, 2005) and thus they may abandon the teaching of EE. For these reasons it is vital to better understand the conflicts EE cause for teachers.

In the present study we focus on paradoxes in entrepreneurship education. Using school-company interaction as an example of entrepreneurship education, we present teachers and principals struggling with the implementation of entrepreneurship education in their teaching practices. At the same time, we aim to generate new knowledge for one under-studied but crucial element of entrepreneurship education, namely school-company interaction (Jones and Iredale, 2010; Sommarström et al., 2017). The research question of the study is ‘what role do paradoxes play in the adoption of entrepreneurship education?’
The study follows a qualitative methodology with a content analysis including semi-structured interviews with teachers and principals from different parts of Finland. The analysis of the respondents’ explanations shows that they feel confused and their behaviour seems inconsistent. However, the stories also show different ways teachers and principals cope with the expectations and practical difficulties. The reasoning of the principals and teachers indicates that an obstacle for one teacher seems to be an opportunity for another teacher.

The contribution of the study is threefold: first, we show that teachers’ experiences with EE paradoxes are closely related to the adoption of EE. Our results show that most of the paradoxes are borne out of the teachers’ expectations and misunderstandings rather than stemming from the legitimacy of EE itself. Second, the study clarifies the principals’ role in managing the introduction of EE in schools and especially in creating the relationships with partnering businesses. In this sense, the adoption of EE is severely threatened if the principle is unwilling to manage EE. Finally, by means of empirical evidence, we provide more understanding of the complexity of schools’ cooperation with companies.

The study is structured as follows: First, we present the key concepts and theoretical framework of paradoxes, entrepreneurship education and cooperation with companies. Second, the methodology of the study and the gathering of data are presented in detail. Third, the outcomes of the study and the emerging paradoxes in each category are declared and the study ends with some conclusions.

Paradoxes

The word paradox comes from Greek and consists of two parts: ‘para’ meaning “contrary to” and ‘doxa’ meaning “opinion” (Online Etymology Dictionary). A paradox expresses something that is logically absurd, but at the same time true (The Chambers Dictionary, 2008). For the purposes of this study, paradox is defined as a statement or situation that contradicts itself, but still seems to be true.

A paradox consists of elements that seem true in isolation, but absurd or irrational when they appear simultaneously (Lewis, 2000). According to Lewis (2000), a self-referential paradox appears in one utterance where a contradiction is already embedded in the statement itself. The contradiction becomes apparent when the related explanations are left out of the sentence, as for example in the expression ‘Less is more’, which is commonly used in advertisements. Another type of paradox involves the mixed messages that are formed when opposing statements are given about the same phenomenon (Lewis, 2000). In this case, the statements are usually given by different people who see the matter from different points of view as shown above.

Paradoxes can be used when seeking a change and there is a need to declare an existing matter as an opposite to a better alternative (Hartshorn and Hannon, 2005). In this case, the presenter of a paradox explains the views, trying to show his/her own view in a better light. However, change in an organization (e.g., a school) is not linear and smooth but creates tensions between actors and may cause anxiety for the people concerned. Paradoxes become apparent through self or social reflection (Cobb and Rubin,
They arise when an individual begins to defend his/her own view, which another experiences as being illogical or absurd.

Various types of paradoxes have been identified, including practical, occurring, obstructing, organizational, and inspiring paradoxes (Dea, 2016; Greenglass et al., 2003; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Lewis, 2000). A practical paradox refers to controversial situations where opposite alternatives co-exist (Dea, 2016). An occurring paradox is a paradoxical situation that arises along with the development of something (Lewis, 2000). For example, entrepreneurial learning takes place when teachers step back and let the students be the active players. An obstructing paradox is a situation that forms a barrier to doing something, for example, when there are no objectives and it becomes difficult to work. Similarly, too many objectives may hinder work (Greenglass et al., 2003). An organizational paradox is a situation that arises from the characteristics of the organization (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013). For example, entrepreneurship education is decided upon by managers who do not necessarily know the subject, while those who are experts are not allowed to make the decisions (Cornforth, 2004; Smith et al., 2012). Finally, an inspiring paradox is related to the tensions arising from development. It is intriguing and creates energy to continue towards new goals (Lewis and Dehler, 2000).

**Entrepreneurship education in schools**

The aim of entrepreneurship education, at the basic education level in Finnish schools, is to provide students with knowledge and skills regarding entrepreneurship, and if possible, in an authentic environment. Furthermore, the aim is to enhance entrepreneurial skills, and promote understanding and positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship. The idea is that students are able recognize their entrepreneurial potential and make knowledgeable decisions concerning their future whether it is or is not as an entrepreneur (Henderson and Robertson, 2016; Ruskovaara, 2014).

Several studies have presented useful tools, methods and ideas of how to put entrepreneurship education into practice. For example, simulations, games, projects with actual clients and mini-enterprise programmes are highlighted as valuable because they often have a real-world connection (Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004; Mwasalwiba, 2010; Ruskovaara and Pihkala, 2014). Furthermore, different interaction practices with companies are mentioned as being useful, whether it is a school class visit to a company or a company representative visiting a class (Sommarström et al., 2017). Collaboration with companies can also take the form of joint projects or a task that a company has ordered from students (Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004; Neck and Greene, 2011).

As entrepreneurship education can be implemented in different ways (e.g. Mwasalwiba, 2010), also entrepreneurship can be taught in many ways. It could be taught as one subject among other school subjects, or as an optional subject besides the ordinary ones (Matlay and Carey, 2007), a short entrepreneurship course of a few weeks (Berglund and Holmgren, 2007), or even via an entrepreneurship club in the afternoon outside the ordinary school times (Pittaway et al., 2010). Furthermore, an entrepreneurial approach can be implemented in teaching and learning in every subject at all education levels (Neck and Greene, 2011; Ruskovaara, 2014).
Paradoxes in entrepreneurship education

Paradoxes in teaching occur when the school system faces changes and when there is a combination of old and new teaching approaches (Lewis, 2000), for example in a situation when the curriculum is changing. The change may lead to practical paradoxes in terms of controversial situations between the old and the new, but also occurring paradoxes may arise as the new approach is developing (Lewis, 2000). A school is an organization with teachers as subject specialists, a principal and other school personnel, all of whom may take controversial decisions (Cornforth, 2004; Smith et al., 2012). Steering documents and directives are interpreted individually and in different ways. The different interpretations cause tensions among teachers (Knight and Paroutis, 2017; Kozica and Brandl, 2015), which in turn lead to uncomfortable and even anxious feelings (Lewis, 2000). Opposing interpretations lead to paradoxes, since the statements conflict with themselves. For example, in entrepreneurship education, the teacher’s role is akin to a facilitator, coach or enabler (e.g. Birdthistle et al., 2007; Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004; Jones and Iredale, 2010; Ruskovaara, 2014) but this may conflict with traditional approaches followed by many schools, potentially creating practical, obstructing and organizational paradoxes.

The different interpretations in the implementation of entrepreneurship education can lead to conflicting thoughts and statements. Entrepreneurship education is a rather new theme in basic education (Fayolle and Klandt, 2006) and if teachers are used to working in their own way this may not match the new approach. Additionally, according to Honig (2004, 264), “traditional pedagogy is frequently in contrast to the needs of entrepreneurial education”. Hence, the ingredients of a paradox may arise when one person gives a solid explanation for the existing procedures, and someone else explains the benefits that a new approach brings (Hartshorn and Hannon, 2005). Further, it is not easy to choose the right starting point for teaching entrepreneurship.

Finally, there are multiple opportunities for paradoxes to arise if a school has decided to include entrepreneurship as one of the subjects. Teachers may have the opportunity to choose an approach that fits them and their school system best. This also creates an opening for many different interpretations and potential paradoxes.

Methodology and analysis

The study follows a qualitative methodology. The strength of qualitative research is that it provides understanding of the phenomena as seen by the participants (Ireland et al., 2009; Sin, 2010). To examine the paradoxes in entrepreneurship education, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The informants were teachers and principals, and in total there were 35 people from different parts of Finland. In the interviews a frame of questions was followed, but the informants were given the possibility to describe their own practices in their own words. The interviews focused on entrepreneurship, creation of collaboration with companies, why they had chosen a certain approach and why they had to refrain from something they would have liked to choose. The list of themes discussed with the informants is presented in Appendix 1.
The data was read carefully several times and a content analysis was carried out. In the initial analysis, the informants’ comments concerning choices for or against the implementation of entrepreneurship and interaction with companies were closely examined in a careful analysis and then compared with other corresponding explanations (Gioia et al., 2013; Nag and Gioia, 2012). Next, in the second-level analysis, we utilized the typology of paradoxes as a framework; the data was divided and analysed through the theoretical lenses of practical, occurring, obstructing, organizational, and inspiring paradoxes. Claims that conflicted with themselves or seemed absurd were identified as paradoxes. These paradoxes were included in the results of the study. Next, a comparative analysis was conducted since it points out statements or opinions that differ and it is useful for determining similarities and differences (Goldberg and Deb, 1991; Opricovic and Tzeng, 2004).

The study was carried out in Finland, where entrepreneurship education has been part of the national curriculum in basic education since 1995. Basic education is part of compulsory education and students are aged between 7 and 16 years. The national curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2009) is a guiding document for all schools to follow, and it sets the objectives and core contents of all subjects. In the national core curriculum entrepreneurship education is described as one cross-curricular theme which needs to be embedded in all subjects and in the schools’ operating culture. In addition, some schools have decided to offer entrepreneurship as an optional subject.

Outcomes of the study - Paradoxes in teaching and learning situations

Paradoxes emerged from the teachers’ and principals’ reports about how they had experienced entrepreneurship education in their schools.

The following chapter highlights the confusion and inconsistency that teachers and principals experienced related to entrepreneurship education, and especially related to their interaction with companies. Practical paradoxes mostly arose in the teachers’ collaborative work, and when traditional teaching and new approaches to the corporate world are encountered. Hence, controversial interpretations seemed to arise among teachers concerning practical teaching solutions. The organizational paradoxes which were identified referred to factors such as responsibility, expertise, and interaction with companies (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013). The identified obstructing paradoxes emerged from teachers’ tensions and anxiety regarding new methods. This manifested itself in refusal by the teachers to carry out or accept new teaching approaches.

Practical paradoxes

Success can become a problem. In one case, entrepreneurship as an optional subject gave rise to a paradox by becoming too popular. Entrepreneurship was offered as an optional subject that many students chose, however, too many students were interested in the

subject, which led to resource difficulties for the school, so they had to stop offering the
subject. The situation became a paradox due to this radical solution. The school’s
principal commented on the decision as follows:

> We have had it and it has been very popular. The problem has been that the teachers,
who have been willing or run a course, had so many lessons in other subjects that it
became too much for them. It was an extra load for teachers, requiring quite a lot of
planning time and took a lot of energy. For this reason, in these last years, we have
actually refused to have entrepreneurship because we have not had teachers to teach
this subject. (Interviewee 1, principal)

It is evident that a part of the slow adoption of entrepreneurship education in
schools is a result of different practical paradoxes emerging in schools when they start
following the curriculum. The citation above shows clearly that the school and its
principal could not anticipate the needs related to EE, which led to a loss of control. In
these cases, it would be very difficult to make these schools try again. The example further
suggests a prioritization pattern in the principal’s reasoning — instead of organising the
teaching afresh, entrepreneurship seemed to be an extra duty that was abandoned. From
this perspective, entrepreneurship education still seemed to represent a new entrant in the
school, that faced the liability of newness (cf. Stinchcombe, 1965) with the school
management.

Another case of a practical paradox arose from a teacher’s frustrations. For one
teacher, it seems that for the committed teacher, it was not enough to be entrepreneurial,
it would also be necessary to cope with building an entrepreneurial spirit in class. This
goal seemed impossible to reach and therefore the teacher rather settled with traditional
teaching. The following quote the interviews illustrates this view:

> We teachers are often enterprising people, but it is not just about us. As teachers we
should be enterprising but... (it is not enough because) ...we have to allow the
entrepreneurial atmosphere in the classroom. That is the thing. (Interviewee 16,
teacher)

In this case, it seems that a practical paradox arises from the teacher’s self-defined
objectives. Here, these objectives set very high standards that the teacher would want to
reach or would otherwise not be able to commit to the task. This pattern suggests that
communicating to teachers about easier ways to conduct entrepreneurship education
could include a message concerning lowering standards for these teachers.

**Occurring paradoxes**

Some teachers may feel insecure or uncomfortable before they determine how to work
with entrepreneurship education as part of the school programme. Our data suggests that
an occurring paradox can change its shape towards becoming an inspiring paradox. In the
following quotation a principal tells the story of one of the form teachers:

> When the entrepreneurial class started, one teacher was of the opinion that she
would not ever do it... she said, ‘I don’t want to do it’. However, this teacher had an
entrepreneurship class for a 3-year period until the end of the last school year. When
I started to select a new form teacher for the next class for a 3-year period, she said
that ‘if I may not be the form teacher for the entrepreneurship-class, I do not want
to be a form teacher at all. That is, when she found out and realized that an
entrepreneurial approach was not about economy and business, but is about the
finding of one’s own strengths, courageously experimenting, ..., and learning
responsibility as well. She found it interesting and wanted to continue. (Interviewee
11, principal)

The case can be interpreted in two ways: first, it seems that this teacher was a
model case of unwillingness to change. Embarking on an entrepreneurship course
represented a change towards something new and three years later leaving
entrepreneurship would have been another change towards something new. From this
perspective, the principal’s managerial role seems decisive in making the change take
place (Hämäläinen et al., 2018). Another interpretation of the case suggests that this
dramatic change in the attitude towards entrepreneurship education could be about
learning. That is, for the teacher, the normative expectations of EE transformed into
personal EE practices that became central elements of the teacher’s identity as a form
teacher. At the same time, as this case is encouraging for EE promotion, it suggests that
it will be a difficult task to introduce unwilling teachers to EE through experimentation
and personal commitment.

It seems, however, that the introduction of EE requires overcoming the challenges
of learning, even if the audience is against the change. According to Lewis (2000),
paradoxes emerge when new things come and replace the old things. She argues that the
more things change, the more they remain the same (Lewis, 2000). In general, the
respondents reported stories and situations of change and on these occasions, the changes
seemed large in terms of the pedagogy, learning environment, resourcing, cooperation
and the like. However, having gone through these changes, the participants paradoxically
considered the changes to be quite small or even non-existent. In the data, one principal
told a story about their large-scale cooperation with surrounding stakeholders and
concluded that:

...above the cabinet on my wall, the portrait of the founder of the comprehensive
schools in Finland is looking at us, so we can note that since 1866 when the basic
school regulation was adopted in Finland, nothing has changed... it still holds true
that learning by doing is the best learning. (Interviewee 9, principal)

The excerpt above suggests that regardless of the magnitude of change expected
from the teachers and principals, they seem to have fitted within the general objectives of
basic education for 150 years. In that sense, large changes are paradoxically small from a
longer perspective.

Organizational paradoxes
Who should take the initiative towards teaching or integrating entrepreneurship in
education? The answer seems to create an organizational paradox, where each of the
personnel claims that it is not their duty to start changing methods. There appears to be
uncertainty among both the principals and teachers interviewed as to who would be the
right person to suggest either a stand-alone visit or deeper cooperation with a school class.
In another words, the principals have not assumed the responsibility for managing
entrepreneurship education (Hämäläinen et al., 2018). Confusion concerning authority
and responsibility may create anxiety among the teachers (Barraket, 2005). In our data,
some principals explained that they had their hands full with administrative work and so did not have the time to negotiate with companies. One principal accepted the responsibility and considered that seeking cooperation partners was a part of the principal’s administrative work. The interviewee explained the role of the principal as a supporter. In the respondent’s view the principle should demonstrate the power of administration and negotiation (Burhanuddin, 1997) by inviting directors and managers to the office and spending time in negotiations. This principle mentioned that:

I had invited the managing director [Name], who is a well-known person, here to my office and I initiated a discussion about the interaction between our school and the company. [Name] was surprised and questioned why he should cooperate with a primary level school. He continued that he was interested in somewhat older students who are already studying business or so on. I explained and managed to convince him that the future decision makers, influencers, and experts may be currently studying in the school and some of them obviously are his present customers, or if not so, the parents of the students may be their customers.

(Interviewee 4, principal)

Paradoxically, the principals’ story is about adopting the role of an entrepreneur and a salesman, selling school cooperation to hesitant business contacts. The story of successful negotiations show that the principal is slightly excited about the negotiation processes. However, on the question of EE adoption in schools, the organizational paradoxes seem discouraging — the challenge is related to the principals’ ability to accept a new active role, not only as a managerial decision maker, but also as a promoter of EE to businesses.

Obstructing paradoxes

The obstructing paradoxes that we identified in this study resemble practical paradoxes in the sense that the principals’ and teachers’ reasoning seemed to be closely related to their personal standards and convictions. Paradoxically, teachers who are professionals in guiding their students to learn at school, reported personal limitations themselves in learning:

Now with this new curriculum, at least in our school, it means more studying and as you may know teachers can fail to embrace so much information. There are limits to how much a teacher can take in... (Interviewee 20, teacher)

Our data suggests that for many teachers the new curriculum was a burden because they had to learn and embrace new things. The new curriculum means changes in teaching and so the teachers are obliged to reflect upon their teaching practices regarding the new areas to be included (González-Weil et al., 2014). Instead of seeing an opportunity to do something new that the curriculum recommends, many of the teachers declined this opportunity.

Another type of obstructing paradox that we found in our study was related to the teachers’ convictions and inner rules. These rules included concepts such as equal treatment, full control of the teacher or keeping the school clear from commercial organisations. The paradox of equal treatment became evident, as some teachers tried to create the same teaching for parallel classes and thus needed to find a company that could
arrange the same programme three or four times. One of the teachers expressed her worry by saying that

In our elementary school, everyone should be treated equally and I’m also for the principle of justice that all students should have the same programme. (Interviewee 18, teacher)

In the data, the obstructing paradoxes seemed to circle around the teachers’ conceptions of integrity and justice. These conceptions may partly arise from misunderstandings or failures in communicating about the aims, meaning and methods of EE. For the adoption of EE in schools, this interpretation is good news, as it suggests that at least some of these conflicts could be managed through better communication and training.

**Inspiring paradoxes**

The inspiring paradoxes that arose in our data occurred in terms of satisfied teachers who allowed their happiness radiate to their students (Kim and Schallert, 2011). In our data the inspired paradoxes were related to the teacher’s changing role, student-centred learning, the students’ ability to take responsibility, and the students’ ability to create value. The classroom is known as a place for learning and it can be assumed that a teacher feels comfortable when teaching in the classroom (Ruskovaara and Pihkala, 2014). Teachers seemed to be inspired when they noticed that learning can be more effective outside the school which has been built for learning. This view is reflected in the following comment from one of the interviewees:

It may be said that we are all winners when we come out of our four walls. It brings a variation to everyday life, different ways of working, and above all, it is a break in our daily routines with these meetings. The visits have had positive feedback.

(Interviewee 14, teacher)

In the data, many teachers reported cases that go even further, changing the role of the teacher to that of a mentor and giving the students more responsibility for organizing the learning and completing projects. The students arrange the date and time for the visits and all the practical arrangements. The teacher remains more in the background, ready to help if needed. Some teachers took a further step towards student-centred learning when they suggested that in teachers’ continuing professional development events students are the experts to present how their school is doing in entrepreneurship education.

The question of the students’ own abilities and power seems to be a rich source of paradoxes. The students can do extensive surveys for companies, but they are not able to open an account in a bank by themselves, due their young age. One teacher explained the students’ inability to take initiatives by saying that:

Sometimes, I think they may be a little helpless too, those who have been spoilt too much by parents or something like that... (Interviewee 16, teacher)

Paradoxically, the teacher referred to the parents concerning the lack of responsibility of the students and used that to argue why the students should not be given more responsibility. In several interviews the teachers referred to the young age of the students as a reason why they could not manage to make their own decisions. However, one principal did not accept the idea of helpless students when he explained their
ingenuity and problem solving for the students’ host company (Gibb, 2011; Jones and Iredale, 2010; Kickul et al., 2010). He said that:

... Then this company manager gave the assignment to the class by explaining the problem. One 7th class student was quick enough to solve this matter and the solution was so simple that experienced and wise actors did not see it, simply because they started to solve the problem scientifically. The class got the prize award and support for school camp. (Interviewee 4, principal)

Most of the stories related to inspiring paradoxes that we identified started from doubts and disbelief for the principals and teachers. In the data, the respondents reported unexpected positive outcomes of EE projects and company interaction. In seems that regarding this type of paradox, the change of mood can only take place once you have already started the process. From this perspective, inspiring paradoxes are good news as they help to communicate the outcomes of EE to teachers and principals.

Conclusions

The research field of EE is wide and polyphonic. For example, there are studies that approach EE from a neoliberal governance point of view (Komulainen et al., 2011). Additionally, EE and vocationalism in education understandably have a lot of similarities (Gonon, 2009), at least from the perspective that they both are interested in equipping students for working life. In this study, we concentrated on one element of EE, namely school-company interaction, and especially, we aimed at understanding paradoxes that arise in the adoption of EE in basic education.

Entrepreneurship education is a rich source of paradoxes that may slow and hinder the adoption of EE in schools. Our study shows that teachers and principals experienced a wide set of paradoxes that made them feel insecure, confused and inconsistent. As a result of this, teachers declined to engage in the adoption of EE or even gave up on processes that had been started.

One of the main results of this study is about the source of such paradoxes. On the basis on our analysis, a sizable share of the paradoxes surrounding EE emerge from the expectations, misconceptions and inertia of the teachers. Unexpectedly, these paradoxes did not stem much from the legitimacy of entrepreneurship education per se but more from the aptitude for change and the high personal and pedagogical standards of the teachers. While many of these paradoxes are avoidable, many of them have the capacity to slow down the adoption of EE.

The analysis of paradoxes in the adoption of EE uncovers another important finding. The data shows that the principals’ inability or unwillingness to manage EE in their schools is rather common. This finding is highly important as the principals may limit the progress in the school, even if there would be interested teachers available. The principals’ role seems critical in taking an active role and for guiding the teachers to embark on EE as well as building relationships with companies. We suggest that as the pedagogical leaders in their schools, principals are in a key position to correct teachers’ misplaced expectations and misunderstandings about the aims, meaning and methods of EE.
After 25 years since its introduction in the Finnish national curriculum, EE is still considered a newcomer. The analysis shows that in many schools the principals and teachers apply a pedagogical prioritization in the organization their work. Should the workload be too heavy, the concept of EE too blurred or the first experiments with EE be negative, principals and teachers seem ready to opt for the older and more important tasks. This prioritization problem could be partly managed through training and better management of EE. In general, it seems that teacher training should embrace the task of preparing teachers and principals to anticipate the paradoxical situations in the introduction of EE. Furthermore, for teachers, understanding the outcomes of EE could help them better endure the uneasiness during the initiation of EE in schools. Further studies are needed to better understand the prioritization behaviour related to EE: what are the principals’ and teachers’ prioritization criteria, how can the prioritization behaviour be changed, how is this aspect socially shared between the teachers?

The study has some obvious limitations. First, the data was collected from one country only, which may be noted as a limitation of the study. However, Finland is the first EU country to embed entrepreneurship education as a cross-curricular theme in national curricula and therefore Finnish results can be of interest to countries who want to follow the development of entrepreneurship education in schools. Second, as a qualitative study, the generalizability of the results is limited. Quantitative research is needed to learn more about the paradoxes related to the adoption of EE in schools. The interest in connecting education with the outside world has a long history and is reflected in vocationalism. In some sense, vocationalism (Gonon, 2009) and entrepreneurship education similarly aim to prepare the students with the working life. Therefore, we believe that our findings could provide interesting avenues to study also from other educational perspectives.
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committee of the regions, *Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan. Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe /* COM/2012/0795 final */


APPENDIX 1

Themes discussed with informants in semi-structural interviews:
1. How many company visits do you make per school year? How many other visits
to, for instance, museums, science centres or other destinations do you make?
2. What other kinds of cooperation take place with outside actors?
3. How do you get in touch with companies? Who takes an active role in arranging
cooperation or visits?
4. What are the practical arrangements for the visits?
5. What is the purpose of the visits? How interested is the teacher in that kind of
   teaching?
6. How is the schoolwork connected to the visits?
7. Which companies are located in the vicinity?
8. How do the classes plan the visits in advance?
9. How do the classes process the visits afterwards?
10. What are the teacher’s attitudes to and thoughts about the visits in general?