

The evolution of social entrepreneurship: What have we learned?

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Abstract:

Purpose – If there is one thing that truly characterizes entrepreneurship and especially social entrepreneurship, it is the “engaged scholarship” at their very heart. That is, teaching, outreach/service and research are connected, often tightly. The purpose of this paper therefore is to discuss the evolution of social entrepreneurship and the lessons learned.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper reports on the results of a multi-country survey dealing with social entrepreneurship.

Findings – It is found that a lot of maturing needs to be done in the area of social entrepreneurship work.

Originality/value – This paper provides real value to the literature by showing what is actually done in the teaching of social entrepreneurship.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship | managerial effectiveness | action research | business education

Article:

If there is one thing that truly characterizes entrepreneurship and especially social entrepreneurship, it is the “engaged scholarship” (Van de Ven, 2007) at their very heart. That is, teaching, outreach/service and research are connected, often tightly. However, as we will see, this has proven very much the proverbial “two-edged sword”. While this engagement with the community, with entrepreneurs and with students has paid many dividends, many would also argue that this has impeded entrepreneurship from earning the kind of intellectual legitimacy that it needs to progress. It is not just that “ivory tower” mindsets do not exactly abound, it is also that the field shows a breadth that is remarkable in its inclusiveness, indeed, inclusive to a fault.

It should not then surprise scholars and educators that there is often little consistency in the topics that we study or in what we teach. This essay was originally intended to offer a North American perspective, but what we see in how the field has evolved, coupled with what we find in examining social entrepreneurship pedagogies and instructors differs little.

Social entrepreneurship was also born as highly engaged with the community, with social entrepreneurs and with students. The authors (among others) started symposiums and workshops on social entrepreneurship starting in 2000 at both the Entrepreneurship Division of the Academy of Management and the US Association for Small Business & Entrepreneurship (USASBE), and later the International Council on Small Business (ICSB) to raise awareness and interest. Despite its amazing degree of acceptance in terms of courses offered, social entrepreneurship is struggling to generate serious scholarly attention. Thus, it might be most instructive to consider the evolution of social entrepreneurship as a field in light of how entrepreneurship itself evolved.

The format of this essay will begin with an overview of the intellectual development of entrepreneurship and then social entrepreneurship. We discuss some of the difficulties that both have faced – and continue to face. In particular, there remain serious issues over defining “social entrepreneurship”. However, as the research has evolved, the “weakness” of social entrepreneurship's entanglement of research, teaching and outreach has become a source of opportunities. What we are learning about how social entrepreneurs think tells us much about how any entrepreneur thinks and, in turn, that has profound implications for the classroom.

From there, we jump to a discussion of the current state of affairs with a careful look into definitional issues where we see that the “all-things-to-all-people” inclusiveness of the field remains that two-edged sword. However, if we are to begin addressing how the shared mental map of social entrepreneurship may be evolving, who better to study than those who teach it? We analyze two broad, inclusive data sets that address the mental models of SE instructors: a large database of SE course syllabi and a large online survey of SE instructors that directly addresses their mental models related to SE.

The reader should come away not only with some very interesting questions to ask about social entrepreneurship, but they should also take away a renewed sense of the opportunities. For example, we have clearly identified that genuine experiential exercises are critical to advancing students' entrepreneurial thinking from a more novice mindset to a more expert mindset

(Krueger, 2007). The reader will see that has not diffused as far in social entrepreneurship classes. For instructors, this represents a golden opportunity to enhance their students' learning. For students, this should also represent a golden opportunity to become more entrepreneurial in their thinking, e.g. to take control of their own education. The authors invite the reader to join the adventure. How can we help you?

From entrepreneurship to social entrepreneurship: the developmental trajectory

Words matter. It took hundreds of years for the term “entrepreneur” to reach a point where everyone knows the word and what it means (not to mention its largely positive connotations). But “social entrepreneurship” was essentially first coined in 1980 and the late 1990s its acceptance in academic and non-academic circles began to accelerate. But to borrow a phrase, is the field of social entrepreneurship growing [...] or just getting bigger?

Scholars and educators alike still have some minor difficulties accepting the empirical reality that entrepreneurs are made, not born, that they are somehow special people. However, there remains a strong, almost visceral notion that even if entrepreneurs are not special people, they still do special things. The field of entrepreneurship spent more than a few years entangled in personality psychology with precious little to show for years of work. The field turned to more of a focus on behaviors: what do entrepreneurs actually do? For instance, Welsh took the observational techniques worldwide to Russia in the first studies coming out of Russia since the Revolution of 1917 (Luthans et al., 1993), as well as other organizational behavior modification techniques (Welsh et al., 1993a, b), and studied entrepreneurs there (Kaufmann et al., 1995). Chronicling their activities internationally was a step forward, but absent any serious theory to guide us, this has offered us little more. If the “heart” of entrepreneurship is seeing and acting on opportunities, then that would seem a logical domain for analysis, yet understanding how entrepreneurs think will require different tools and a different mindset.

One would be hard pressed to identify more than a handful of studies that suggest that entrepreneurs are somehow these unique, “special” people. We are even hard pressed to identify what entrepreneurial behaviors are uniquely “special” (beyond starting a venture) yet this romantic notion of the heroic (or clever or [...]) entrepreneur is very hard to let go of. How much harder then is it for us to let go of the notion of the heroic social entrepreneur?

Return of the “Heffalump”?

One of the most powerful early essays on studying entrepreneurs draws on, of all things, “Winnie the Pooh”. One memorable episode was Pooh and his friends searching for the legendary “Heffalump”. As they circled the woods, they soon noted suspicious footprints which grew larger and larger. Clearly evidence of the Heffalump, yes? In reality, they were carefully studying their own tracks. Peter Kilby used this clever metaphor to demonstrate how too often we defined “entrepreneur” or “entrepreneurship” as whatever it is we are studying. To this day, this resonates in three areas:

We still seem unable to agree on the key definitions for obviously critical terms such as “entrepreneur” and “entrepreneurship”, nor do we make a habit of carefully explicating our definitions.

Our samples are too often convenient, not random (“That looks interesting – let us follow those tracks!”). Add that to the definitional issues and it is little wonder that many studies were atheoretic, ad hoc and unreplicable.

We even seem to miss Kilby's point and merrily offer up the prospects of multiple Heffalumps; if one set of tracks differ, it must be a different breed of Heffalump, yes?

Emergence and evolution

To this day, even the leading entrepreneurship and management journals focus considerable effort to understanding the “who” of entrepreneurship and the “what do they do?” However, it has become increasingly productive to accept the realities that entrepreneurship is reflective of complex, dynamic processes that result in the emergence of opportunities and the emergence of new economic (actually supraeconomic) activity. How does the opportunity and the resulting activity evolve over time?

However, the process approach differs substantively from a focus on the “who” and “what”. Both economics and sociology offer us a wide variety of tools and, more important, a wide variety of theory by which we can explore process. At the extreme, it is even argued that opportunities are essentially exogenous. That is, we might as well consider opportunities as something we discover. While we may differ in our preferences and abilities to be alert to opportunities, that the critical processes to study reside in how opportunities manifest themselves over time in (presumably) entrepreneurial activity.

Entrepreneurial thinking

On the other hand, entrepreneurial thinking and decision making is itself an intriguing set of complex, dynamic processes that has proven highly productive. The waning of personality psychology led to a steady growth in social psychology approaches to studying entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship (see Shaver and Scott (1992) for an excellent early review). This started introducing proven theory and methods. For a key example, entrepreneurial situations seem to be associated with differing patterns of causal attribution. For another, we have generated probably hundreds of studies of opportunity recognition that do not seem to generalize very well. Too often the conclusion was that if the results are so idiosyncratic, then it really is a function of some unique “entrepreneurial” characteristics. However, the rise of social psychology offered a competing explanation. Absent any strong theory about the nature of how we perceive opportunity, our measures of “opportunity” are what is idiosyncratic.

A social psychological perspective also brought useful tools for studying entrepreneurial activity. One that the authors are biased toward also addresses issues of emergence. For example, applying variations of Ajzen and Fishbein's long-established Theory of Planned Behavior has allowed scholars to formally and rigorously model entrepreneurial intentions (Krueger, 1993, 2000; Krueger et al., 2000).

The next logical step was to begin applying theory and tools from cognitive psychology (Baron, 1998) such as scripts, pattern recognition and mental prototyping. This brought a deeper, richer array of conceptual models that can be tested. Cognitive psychology tells us that human decision making is often anchored in deep anchoring assumptions of which we are rarely mindful. If we are to understand entrepreneurial thinking, we need to understand these deep beliefs and their origins (Krueger, 2007).

Studying entrepreneurship education

One of the most promising domains for studying entrepreneurial thinking is in the analysis of entrepreneurial learning and education. A better understanding of how we learn to think entrepreneurially. E.g. in a classroom, would be very illuminating in many respects

intellectually. It also reunites entrepreneurship research to its roots in a highly engaged scholarship.

Educational psychology tells us what we teach and, more important, how we teach it should be strong predictors of critical outcomes. The evolution of entrepreneurial thinking can also draw profitably from developmental psychology (Krueger, 2007)[1]. Educational psychology also is persuasive that context also matters. In particular, instructor effects are likely to be substantial.

Social entrepreneurship?

For those readers already familiar with extant work in social entrepreneurship, they likely read the above overview of entrepreneurship's evolution as a field and noted how social entrepreneurship is wrestling with many of the same issues. They also no doubt see that the same opportunities hold. In particular, studying social entrepreneurship education should be extraordinarily fertile ground.

Chasing the SE Heffalump?

So many social entrepreneurship studies have been descriptive. Case studies can be powerful tools if they can test or even help build theory, but we have seen too little of this. A central issue here is the problem of definitions. The definition of “social entrepreneur” is hardly simple, nor is any one definition widely shared. Worse, it is often unclear how any particular study defines its terms. Chasing the SE Heffalump indeed!

Ashoka founder Bill Drayton pushed “social entrepreneurship” as a key term back in 1980, but his definition had much to do with outcomes and the vehicles to deliver those outcomes. That is, the focus was on the venture and its strategies (not just the founders). On the practitioner side, the initial focus was narrowly constrained to “social enterprise”, the for-profit activities engaged in by non-profit organizations. As we progressed, we realized that social entrepreneurship embraced an ever wider range of activities and behaviors. Boschee (2008) notes that from a practitioner perspective, inclusive is better[2]. Noting that in most countries the difference between “not-for-profit” and “for-profit” have more to do with taxes and other non-mission

criteria, drawing a bright line around “social entrepreneurship” as a construct remains an unanswered challenge.

That leads us to the present day where even if we pay lip service to a seemingly rigorous definition such as Dees offers (see below), even scholarly studies use the term broadly and less discriminatingly than we might prefer. In turn, our sampling frames can leave much to be desired. Add in this reality: If we find entrepreneurs to be unique, if not heroic subjects, we are likely to lionize the social entrepreneur and find them even more likely to be unique and heroic. We see altogether too few studies that address social entrepreneurship at the level of ventures and their strategies (Mair and Marti, 2006).

However, social entrepreneurship has proven to have the same opportunities as entrepreneurship. It has proven to be fascinating turf for studying cognition. How do social entrepreneurs think? Do they think like entrepreneurs in general? (Relevant to the definitional issue, by studying cognitive processes can assess how much social entrepreneurs differ – or not – from a broader sample of entrepreneurs.

An even more exciting prospect is that studying entrepreneurial cognition is beginning to surface insights that apply far more broadly. Studying how social entrepreneurs think should be even more fruitful. Where else could we better study entrepreneurial passion? And what does studying social ventures tell us about passion? One recent study found that individuals can indeed have multiple “hot buttons”, multiple passions. For example, prospective entrepreneurs consistently characterize their preferred ventures as both financially growing and environmentally sustainable, showing passion for both scalability and sustainability (Krueger et al., 2006).

We also know that when people perceive opportunities, we rarely perceive opportunities that are unidimensional. Purely economic opportunities are remarkably rare (Krueger, 2005). Our study on social entrepreneurship education points out that we are not even teaching much on economic opportunities or basic entrepreneurship fundamentals (see summary of syllabi content below). One's intention toward a course of action is almost always influenced by our perceptions of how important people in our lives will support our decision (Krueger, 1993, 2000). Moreover, almost all rational decisions still include an element of emotional reasoning. Comparing intentions toward social ventures and more conventional ventures can elicit significant differences such as the fear of failure is much lower for an intent to start a social venture (Krueger and Welp, 2008).

Ashoka founder Bill Drayton argued that a great social entrepreneur thought like a great entrepreneur, moreover, a great entrepreneur thinks like a social entrepreneur. All our preliminary evidence may suggest that Drayton's nonacademic insight is correct, yet growing numbers of studies appear to assume that social entrepreneurs are almost completely distinct from the typical “commercial” entrepreneur. (“Special” individuals?) Why? Of those teaching “social entrepreneurship”, growing numbers are no longer trained in entrepreneurship (even in business schools). The tracks they are following are intriguing but the only connection they see to entrepreneurship is the word. What might be the implications of this?

Implications

When we look at social entrepreneurship courses and when we look at social entrepreneurship instructors, the main pattern we are likely to see is [...] no pattern. At this stage of the field's evolution, what is taught and how it is taught will be highly idiosyncratic. It will reflect the instructor's mental models such as their mental prototype of “social entrepreneur”. If they see a “social entrepreneur” as a social activist who happens to have a venture, how they teach the course should differ significantly from those instructors who see a “social entrepreneur” as an entrepreneur whose mission is primarily social. And given the increasingly disparate backgrounds (and mental models) of SE instructors, it should not be surprising that we will not find any well-defined patterns of SE pedagogy. The sample that we are analyzing currently (see below) is well-suited for this, as it appears dominated by instructors without entrepreneurship training.

A second, related implication is that entrepreneurship-trained instructors are typically very project-based. Even if they are not fully engaged in problem-based learning, they at least ask students to engage the community with real-world projects and/or in designing personally viable ventures of their own. We would thus expect to see relatively little emphasis on field projects, especially on designing innovative new products/services or designing new social ventures.

A third implication is that we might see a very different picture if we shifted focus to sustainable entrepreneurship. Those courses tend to have a strong focus on innovation and technology and on actual practice. We would thus expect that where we see instructors whose mental prototype of “social entrepreneur” has a strong “flavor” of sustainability, we will see more field/practice-oriented projects. Where sustainability is not salient, we anticipate the opposite. In fact, our

analysis of syllabi showed very little emphasis on innovation, sustainability or ethics. Not a positive outlook in the economy we face today that finds global warming, dependency on oil and gas, and immigration as major issues (see Welsh and Birch (1997) for a review of entrepreneurial ethics). Could the absence of these seemingly core themes be further evidence that SE is still “getting bigger” and not necessarily “growing”?

Words do matter. Where the words do have a strong consensus of meaning, the shared mental models result in research moving beyond the descriptive and to pedagogy converging on similar methods. Where words do not reflect a consensus shared meaning, we must expect a myriad of different mental models (and thus different course content and pedagogical methods).

As the ensuing analysis shows, we are seeing the likely absence of shared mental models. The pattern is indeed [...] no clear pattern. We also find that this sample of largely non-entrepreneurship SE faculty is significantly less prone to the experiential pedagogies that entrepreneurship-trained faculty take for granted.

Let us next look at where we are now, look at the context which continues to be supportive and begin to delve more deeply into our still-thorny definitional issues. From there, we begin the quest to understand how SE instructors think about SE and how to teach it. Looking at two broad, rich databases illustrates both the threats facing SE as a field and [...] the opportunities for scholar, instructor and student alike.

Current perspective of social entrepreneurship

The perspective of social entrepreneurship varies widely among academics as well as practitioners in the USA. There are marked differences not only in what social entrepreneurship encompasses, but where it is heading. Some see it as the future savior-the answer among Generation X to “make a difference” and the economists' solution to the trickle down economy that never has happened. To make this point, PBS ran a series entitled, “The New Heroes” in 2005 (PBS, 2005, www.pbs.org/opb/thenewheroes). It has also hit the political spectrum. In a speech in Iowa in December of 2007, Senator Barack Obama, Democratic Presidential hopeful, called for a focus on social entrepreneurs as change agents and an increase in investment in the social sector. He called for a Social Investment Fund Network to be launched that will include grass root groups, foundations, and the government to encourage innovation and expand

successful programs to scale. He said, "I'll start a new Social Entrepreneur Agency to make sure that small non-profits have the same kind of support that we give small businesses". Republican Presidential hopeful John McCain has also echoed a determination to foster private-public partnerships to address some of the social and economic problems, declaring at the Naval Academy in April 2008, "all lives are a struggle against selfishness" (Anderson, 2007; Hunt, 2008a, b).

While all the publicity is good news for social entrepreneurship, a coherent and commonly accepted understanding of the term "social entrepreneurship" still does not exist. The above quotes are a great example of how many tie social entrepreneurship solely to nonprofit organizations. Social entrepreneurship can be practiced in for profit or nonprofit businesses, although the majority of social entrepreneurship as it exists today is found in nonprofit businesses. The vast growth of social entrepreneurs will occur in the for profit sector in the near future, as the new generations of entrepreneurs evolve that do not necessarily see a separation between society and business. The social mission is the center of their business identity and this mission is tied to their personal identity. The focus should not be on the form of business or tax status (for- or nonprofit) but rather the mission.

A revolution is occurring in the way the new generation approaches social problems. This is the first generation of children in which entrepreneurship was a household term and was popularized by the media. They are the first generation of children to have significant role models that have had their own business and these role models are men and women. This is the generation that wants to make a difference that does not see the dividers between work and social impact and responsibility. This is the generation that started businesses at any age, without barriers. Bill Drayton, CEO, chair and founder of Ashoka, one of the best recognized, global organizations that identifies and invests in leading social entrepreneurs, is an example of this. He started a newspaper in grade school. Many are on their fourth or fifth business by the time they hit 30 years old.

So how do we identify a definition that encompasses all the aspects of entrepreneurship while including those aspects unique to social entrepreneurship? Is one important? The Schwab Foundation (2008) defines a social entrepreneur as a:

[...] different kind of social leader who identifies and applies practical solutions, innovates, focuses on social value creation, doesn't wait to secure the resources, is fully accountable, not trapped by constraints of ideology or discipline, refines and adapts approaches, and has a well thought out roadmap.

Social entrepreneurs have been called by Gordon Brown, UK Prime Minister, as “the changers of minds and breakers of rules”, by Bornstein (2004), author of *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurship and the Power of New Ideas*:

[...] what business entrepreneurs are to the economy, social entrepreneurs are to social change. They are the driven, creative individuals who question the status quo, exploit new opportunities, refuse to give up, and remake the world for the better (The School for Social Entrepreneurs, 2006).

Are these qualities unique to social entrepreneurs? The argument has been made that all these qualities can typify an entrepreneur, right down to creating social value through creating jobs. Mair and Marti (2006) view social entrepreneurship rather as a process that is a catalyst for social change to address important social needs that is not dominated by financial benefits for entrepreneurship. They view social entrepreneurship as unique from other forms of entrepreneurship because higher priority is given to social value and development that captures economic value. Dees (2001) also makes a point that while contemporary entrepreneurship definitions can be applied to social entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurship is unique and is one “species of a genus entrepreneur”. What separate them are the distinct missions that assess opportunities differently. Impact is measured in how they have met and continue to meet their mission rather than purely wealth creation (Dees, 2001). Wealth creation is one measure of value creation for the social entrepreneur (Dees, 2001). While Dees acknowledges that markets work reasonably well for entrepreneurs, they do not work well for social entrepreneurs because markets traditionally have not measured social improvements well. While we agree with Dees, we believe one of the reasons that traditional markets do not work well for social entrepreneurs is their heavy reliance on the human side. In terms of resources, social entrepreneurs are much more reliant on human capital than on other capital; and the markets have never measured the value of human capital well.

One measure of human capital that may be appropriate for social entrepreneurs is a new instrument called PsyCap that stands for Psychological Capital (Luthans et al., 2007). Building on the positive organizational behavior (POB) movement (Luthans, 2002a, b, 2003; Nelson and Cooper, 2007; Wright, 2003; Youssef and Luthans, 2008), PsyCap measures self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency in people, critical to the success of any business but much more important even in a social entrepreneurial business. It evaluates what the market measures do not calculate. Not that this instrument is the ultimate gauge, but it is a first step in recognizing and including the value of psychological capital brought to the business through the human side in the market equation.

Others in the fields of sociology, economics, and organizational theory have identified a related concept to human capital, called social capital, although it is used in a somewhat different context (Adler and Kwon, 1999; Leenders and Gabbay, 1999, among others). Adler and Kwon (1999) have defined social capital broadly depending on whether the focus is primarily external (Baker, 1990; Belliveau et al., 1996; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Burt, 1997), internal (Brehm and Rahn, 1998; Inglehart, 1997; Thomas, 1996), or both (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Pennar, 1997). Adler and Kwon's (1999) definition is neutral in regard to the internal/external distinction. They define social capital as, "the sum of resources accruing to an individual or group by virtue of their location in the network of their more or less durable social relations". While social capital plays a major role in the success of a social entrepreneur, it is but one type of capital that is utilized by a social entrepreneur, along with physical capital, human capital, and financial capital. What is interesting here is that like a low crime rate and a clean environment, social capital is a "collective good" in that it is not the private property of anyone who benefits from it (Coleman, 1988). Acknowledging another type of capital which is integral to the success of a social entrepreneur is noteworthy.

Social entrepreneurship educators' survey

We decided to survey those who teach social entrepreneurship, in part, to define the field. As I mentioned above, the field has not been well defined. We used Dees' (2001) definition, currently the most widely accepted definition in the field, as that of a:

[...] change agent in the social sector, by adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value), recognizing new opportunities to serve that mission, engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning, acting boldly without being limited by current resources, and exhibiting higher accountability to constituencies served and the outcomes created

to serve as the beginning point to define the field. Research questions included:

RQ1. What drives/supports/blocks the initiation of social entrepreneurship courses? For instance, does the instructor's definition of social entrepreneurship affect choices related to the course?

RQ2. What drives the choice of course/project format? Does the instructor's definition of social entrepreneurship affect choices related to projects? In other words, what should we teach and how should we teach it?

RQ3. Do the projects drive the course or does the course drive the projects? What do instructors expect to happen?

RQ4. What is the prevalence of experiential learning or service-based learning as compared to the use of cases?

RQ5. What cognitive changes do instructors expect to occur in students as a result of the course?

The survey was based on three theories – role theory, stakeholder theory, and intention theory. Role theory suggests the likelihood of following current entrepreneurial course approaches and programs. Stakeholder theory suggests that outside influences play a major role. Stakeholder theory leads us to ask such questions as just how independent the instructor is designing the course, if courses should be more project oriented if there are multiple courses offered, and if country of origin matters. Based on the work of Hofstede (1980), are high power distance countries less interested in action learning? Intention Theory suggests that perceived barriers are critical to understanding the ability of intent to become action.

The worldwide survey (Welsh et al., 2007) was sent electronically in 2007 to 269 faculty and was gathered from the University Network on social entrepreneurship, USASBE, the Academy of Management, the 2007 Skoll World Forum faculty attendees, the National Consortium of Inventors and Innovators Alliance (NCIIA), the Aspen Institute faculty database, and the Science, Knowledge, and Education Network (SKEN) databases. 145 responses were gathered for an overall response rate of 53.9 percent. However, individual response rates to questions varied widely. Of the 99 that responded to the question of rank, 38 percent were tenured, 24 percent were tenure track faculty, and 37 percent were non-tenure track faculty. Almost 27 percent held the rank of professor, 14 percent associate professor, 19 percent assistant professor, 8 percent adjunct professor, and 32 percent other rank. Of the 119 who responded to the question if they currently teach social entrepreneurship, 40 percent responded yes, 45 percent responded no, and 14 percent are planning a course. Of the 40 that answered the question concerning when

they last taught a course in social entrepreneurship, 67 percent last taught a course in 2007 and 26.53 percent last taught a course in 2006, 4 percent in 2005, and 2 percent in 2004. Notably, 2004 was the earliest year a course was indicated. 68 percent of courses are offered cross-campus. Average course size ranged from ten to 65 students. Out of 104 respondents, 42 (40 percent) said that no courses were offered currently at the colleges or universities in entrepreneurship, 29 (28 percent) offered one course, 16 (15 percent) offered two courses, eight (8 percent) offered three courses, four (4 percent) offered four courses, two (2 percent) offered five courses, and one (1 percent) offered six, seven, or ten courses. Respondents taught primarily at universities and colleges located in the USA, representing 24 states (71 percent). 22 of the 75 respondents that answered this question taught outside the USA in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, Ghana, India, Italy, Mexico, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, and the UK.

Of the 91 responses received on the location where the social entrepreneurship programs were housed, 69 percent indicated they were primarily in business, followed by non-profit management (23 percent), other departments (21 percent), public policy/administration (14 percent), education (9 percent), social work (7 percent), sociology (4 percent), and health care (3 percent). The majority of programs were funded internally (54 percent) compared to externally funding (48 percent). Of these 69 respondents, 35 percent responded that no additional funding exists for social entrepreneurship programs. In terms of program funding, 38 of the 77 (49 percent) responded that the question was not applicable, followed by 14 (18 percent) funded primarily by grants, endowments 12 (16 percent), primarily program revenues, eight (10 percent), and primarily entrepreneurs, five (6 percent).

The instructor and faculty had the most influence on the design and content of the course-55 of the 59 responses (93 percent), students-51 responses (86 percent), external constituencies including social entrepreneurs and the community-45 responses (76 percent), and administrators or other constituencies-26 out of the 59 responses (44 percent). The use of various instructional approaches used by the 69 respondents to this question included: discussion (97 percent), interactive means such as debates, student presentations, etc.) (93 percent) lectures (91 percent), outside resources such as guest speakers, video clips, cases, etc. (88 percent), experiential or “hands-on” exercises (78 percent), and other approaches (33 percent).

We purposely divided the issue of experiential service learning and just experiential learning into two separate questions to see if respondents would report differently. Of the 72 that indicated that they used an experiential/service learning component in their course, 45 identified consulting with a social venture or writing a business plan (62.5 percent), 34 said starting a social

venture (47 percent), 28 included internships with social ventures (39 percent), and 25 include direct service to a social venture (35 percent). Thirteen of the 72 respondents did not include an experiential service learning component in their classes (18 percent). In terms of an experiential learning component that did not include direct action service learning, 50 out of 70 respondents indicated writing a business plan (71 percent), 37 indicated that their students interviewed/shadowed (53 percent), 33 had students write a case on a social enterprise (47 percent), indicated students complete a written case analysis (46 percent). This last category did not include a live case but analysis of a written case given to the students. Five of the 70 respondents had no experiential learning component (7 percent).

119 instructors in the field identified the most important components of a definition of social entrepreneurship as the following: social problems/needs addressed – 76 (64 percent), innovation/innovative idea – 46 (39 percent), community impact – 44 (37 percent), mission based – 37 (31 percent) tied with sustainable (31 percent), outcome-based approach – 35 (29 percent), ethical accountability – 34 (29 percent), multiple stakeholders served – 31 (26 percent) tied with not being limited by resources (26 percent), economic value creation – 23 (19 percent), scalable – 21 (17 percent), and risk taking/defies the odds – 17 (14 percent).

A majority of the respondents believe that social entrepreneurship should not be carved out as a unique, independent field 84 of 145 (58 percent) versus 61 that believe it should be an independent field (42 percent). However, it should be noted that the difference of opinion was not overwhelmingly in favor of one over the other and is not unique early in the history of new disciplines or fields of study. Respondents responded at length and passionately. Those in favor of social entrepreneurship as a separate field said: it has a unique set of characteristics, research and information and it is not tied to one specific field, cross-disciplinary, cuts across the fields of sociology, public policy, social work, urban and community development, education, AND business, more helpful to practitioners as a separate field, would capture the complexity better, practitioners such as Ashoka and Schwab Foundation is defining, not academics, stronger alone so it is not overlooked, contributes uniquely to mankind, the motivation for private entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship diametrically opposed, entrepreneurship stresses adding value to private individuals whereas social entrepreneurship adds value to society, and it makes unique contributions to mankind.

Those in favor of social entrepreneurship remaining a part of the entrepreneurship field is that social entrepreneurship would be stronger and more accepted if it stayed a part of entrepreneurship, separate objectives are not important to carve out, the debate if it stayed in entrepreneurship would help social entrepreneurship take on clearer definitions and grow, many

businesses are integrating social missions, better institutional prominence if it stayed a part of entrepreneurship, delineating the field of social entrepreneurship is not important, the accomplishments are what should be stressed, too early and there is a lack of understanding of what social entrepreneurship accomplishes, sufficient framework already exists from the intersection of corporate social responsibility and entrepreneurship to inform the study of social entrepreneurship, same skills needed for both, it is only entrepreneurship practiced differently, entrepreneurship is still trying to carve out a unique field so it would have the effect of diluting both fields, and it would have more institutional prominence by leaving it as part of entrepreneurship.

When asked, “what does social entrepreneurship contribute uniquely to improving our understanding of social entrepreneurship?” responses included: broader understanding of impact and concepts underlying entrepreneurship, blended values-community action, politics, social movements, mission-making a difference through entrepreneurship, social change and community social equity, social value creation, voluntary contributions, and non-pecuniary motivations, understanding human actions, social economic progress without a purely profit motive, double triple bottom line, better definitions and understanding of broader organizational outcomes.

When asked, “what does entrepreneurship contribute uniquely to improving our understanding of social entrepreneurship?” responses included: running the business side, start-up mentality, sustainability, innovation and creativity, new solutions, goals and objectives, ownership, strategy, opportunity recognition, drive, practical training, rent capture, entrepreneurship behaviors and how to apply these to social entrepreneurship, a solid framework with proven tools and techniques. Overwhelmingly, balancing the market with concerns for people was named as what makes social entrepreneurship unique.

Respondents were asked to identify social entrepreneurship's sustainable competitive advantage or secret to success. The number one response was making a difference in the lives of others that was increasingly important for this generation of students. Student engagement, learning by doing to create social value, economic development by combining the social with the community, integrating teaching and outreach, blended legitimacy, and exciting non-business student interest were other responses. The biggest barrier to social entrepreneurship being taken seriously as an academic field was the schism between the business faculty and all other faculties and the perceptions of each other. Other barriers included lack of acceptance as a field, lack of publication outlets, lack of common language in the discipline, lack of theoretical basis, no formal training in the field for academics, lack of critical faculty and students in social

entrepreneurship, no demand beyond non-profits, first generation college students less interested if the profit motive is not involved, no clear academic home, only a research topic versus a field of study with applications from different fields of study.

Concerning the triple bottom line and whether social entrepreneurship can best assessed by its economic, environmental, and social impact, 64 of the 112 respondents agreed (57 percent) versus 48 who disagreed (43 percent). Social entrepreneurs were markedly seen as filling an existing gap by 50-100 percent by all but five of 86 respondents. The one lesson learned to move the field forward was to become more synergistic and encompass the knowledge base from all the academic fields.

Social entrepreneurship syllabi database

Based on the results from the survey, Welsh et al. (2007) and a student team of Ashley Sutter, Merim Matkulova, and Andrew Angelini from the University of Tampa and Berea College gathered 298 syllabi from around the world to further investigate the educational content of courses in social entrepreneurship. Permission was obtained from the instructors to include their syllabi in the database before inclusion. Of these 298 syllabi, 86 (29 percent) were from courses at universities located outside the USA. The number of courses at universities outside the USA ranged from one to eight. 25 countries were represented, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, The Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, the USA, and Venezuela. Utilizing the double blind research method and then independently comparing the results, researchers dropped courses not considered social entrepreneurship based on Dees (2001) definition. These included courses in non-profit management, sustainability, business management, strategy, corporate social responsibility, finance, and information technology. While many of these courses were labeled social entrepreneurship or had social entrepreneurship as part of the title, analysis based on Dees' definition did not find any components of social entrepreneurship. The popularization of the term became evident from our analysis.

31 categories of data were gathered from a content analysis of the remaining syllabi deemed social entrepreneurship based on the Dees (2001) definition. Basic demographic information including the first and last name of the instructor, the rank of the professor, if the course was team taught, email, university, college, department, country, course ID/code, course title, title

term (social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, micro venturing/micro finance, philanthropy, non-profit, finance, developing economies, and innovation), main focus or theme of the course (micro venturing/micro finance, philanthropy, non-profit, finance, developing economies, innovation, technology, spirituality, ethics, globalization), level of course (undergraduate, graduate, taught to social entrepreneurs), semester taught, year, if it is an online course, definition of social entrepreneurship (non-profit opportunity, profitable opportunity, both profit and non-profit opportunity, emerging field, globalization-mentions the word international or other countries outside the home country), objectives from Bloom and Krathwohl's (1956) taxonomy (understand-learn about social entrepreneurs, advocate-advocate for social change, develop skills-develop entrepreneurial skills, start-start social enterprises), number of materials (books, articles, cases), assignments (number of projects, cases, exams, research papers, book reports, presentations, interviews/bibliographies, reflections, journals), articles (profit, non-profit, issues oriented), cases with the same criteria as articles, number of web sites, number of guest speakers, business plan competitions, individual or group learning projects, service learning projects, and experiential learning (learning by doing).

The majority of courses was taught by an adjunct professor and was individually taught. Only two courses were team taught out of the 298 syllabi. It should be noted that multiple-year syllabi were gathered, so some of the syllabi were from the same course and/or professor different years.

We did this to measure differences over time. The departments the courses were taught out of varied widely and included many outside those in the college or schools of business.

Departments included: accounting, communications, continuing education, corporate studies, economics, engineering, entrepreneurship, environmental studies, finance, information systems, inter-cultural studies, international studies, management, marketing, policy, production and operations management, public and non-profit management, organizational management, quantitative analysis, social sciences, strategy, and urban studies.

The predominant title term for the course was social entrepreneurship and the majority of the courses were graduate level. They were mostly taught in the spring, followed by fall, summer, and winter semesters. The courses were taught from 2001 to 2007, with the most syllabi from 2006 followed evenly by 2005, 2007, and 2004. The instructor defined social entrepreneurship more often as a non-profit opportunity (44 times or 14.77 percent of the courses), followed by profitable opportunity (37 times, or 12.42 percent), both a profit and non-profit opportunity (35 times or 11.74 percent), and lastly an emerging field (24 times, 8.05 percent). Globalization was not indicated in the definition. Concerning the use of verbs to describe the course taken from Bloom and Krathwohl's (1956) taxonomy, understand appeared the most (68 times, or 22.82

percent), then develop/skills (50 times, 16.78 percent), advocate (15 times, or 5.03 percent), and start (four times, or 1.34 percent). From an entrepreneurship perspective where there is a predominant emphasis on starting businesses, this is a significant finding and brings into question how much of the course is based on entrepreneurship.

Instructors used a variety of requirements in their courses. In order, instructors' included projects (67 courses, or 22.48 percent), presentations (54 courses, or 18.12 percent), other assignments not listed (52 courses, or 17.45 percent), cases (29 courses, or 9.73 percent), reflection papers equally with journals (25 courses, 8.39 percent), exams (20 courses, 6.71 percent), research papers (11 courses, 3.69 percent), interviews/biographies (ten courses, 3.36 percent), and book reports (seven courses, 2.35 percent). Of the courses that specifically called for group or individual assignments, 55 (18.46 percent) of the courses included group learning projects, while 37 (12.42 percent) designated individual projects. The number of guest speakers invited to 159 courses, or to 53.36 percent of the courses.

Hands-on projects, defined as any assignment that is outside of a book that requires the student's intimate involvement, was included in 53 courses (17.79 percent). Of these courses, the average weight assigned to the project was 20 percent of the total. If more than one project was listed, we listed only the weight of the major project. No courses gave the student the ability to decide on the type of project to complete. This is significant if we are encouraging creativity and innovation.

Nonprofit projects were available in 17 courses (5.70 percent). Nonprofit earned income projects defined as writing a plan for an earned income strategy for a nonprofit organization was included in three courses (1.01 percent). Working for a profit organization was available in six courses (2.01 percent), while microenterprise projects appeared in two courses (0.067 percent). Students working on social issues rather than for an organization that is for profit or nonprofit was included in seven courses (2.35 percent), and other projects included 17 courses (5.70 percent).

Service learning was defined as learning through service that enables students to apply academic knowledge and critical thinking to meet genuine community needs through a partnership with the community organization. Project consulting in which students consult with a business and produce an end product such as a marketing plan, operation plan, but not a full business plan, was most often cited in 19 courses (6.38 percent). Writing a business plan for a social venture that exists was the second most often included in 13 courses (4.36 percent). Five courses

evaluated the overall social impact of an organization (1.68 percent); while three courses assisted a nonprofit social venture create a profitable earned income plan (1.01 percent). Conducting research for an existing social venture was included in two classes as well as writing a grant proposal(s) for an existing social venture (0.067 percent). Creating and implementing a new social venture and interning at a social venture were both mentioned in one course, respectively.

Experiential learning was defined an experience, learning by doing. An example of this would be interning at an advertising agency. 33 courses (11.07 percent) included writing a business plan for a social venture that does not exist-something the student created. Six courses (2.01 percent) either included interviewing/shadowing or writing a case on an existing social venture. Five courses (1.68 percent) analyzed a case.

103 different books were used in courses. 86 courses used no textbooks. The most often used book was *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurship and the Power of New Ideas* (Bornstein, 2004). This book was used in 23 courses, or 35.4 percent of the total number of courses. The second most often used book was *Enterprising Nonprofits: A Toolkit for Social Entrepreneurship* (Dees et al., 2001). This book was used in 12 courses, or 18.5 percent of all courses. *Strategic Tools for Social Entrepreneurs* (Dees et al., 2004) was used in eight courses, which represent 12.3 percent of the total number of courses. In fourth place, used in five courses, respectively, or 7.7 percent of the courses, was *Strategic Management for Nonprofit Organizations* (Oster, 1995) and *Social Entrepreneurship: The Art of Mission-Based Venture Development* (Brinckerhoff, 2000).

There were a total of 766 different articles used in courses. 45 total courses used articles, or 15.1 percent of courses. On average, 17 articles were used in these 45 courses. The number of articles per course ranged from 0 to 98. The number one article listed in 29 courses was, *The Meaning of Social Entrepreneurship* (Dees, 2001), in eleven classes, "Virtuous capital: what foundations can learn from venture capitalists" (Letts et al., 1997), in nine classes, "Enterprising nonprofits" (Dees, 1998), in eight classes, *The Process of Social Entrepreneurship* (Guclu et al., 2002). There were a number of articles that tied for being listed in six classes: "The competitive advantage of corporate philanthropy" (Porter and Kramer, 2002), "Going to scale: the challenge of replicating social programs" (Bradach, 2003), *A Report from the Good Ship SROI* (Gair, 2002), "Note on starting a nonprofit venture" (Dees and Oberfield, 1991/1992), "The new landscape for nonprofits" (Ryan, 1999), and "Should nonprofits seek profits?" (Foster and Bradach, 2005).

248 total cases were used in 36 courses, or almost seven cases per course (6.889). The number of cases ranged 0-23 per course. New Schools Venture Fund (Dees and Anderson, 2001) was used most often in seven courses. Next was Northwest Ventures Community Ventures Fund (Taylor, 2006) was used in five classes, and four cases tied for third place. Those cases included, Nonprofit mergers: suburban job link and STRIVE/CES (Haider, 2004), “The nature conservancy” (Grossman and Wei-Skillern, 2005), “IPODERAC” (Austin et al., 2002), and “Asian neighborhood design” (Aubry and Mackenzie, 2003).

Only 15 courses cited web sites. 151 total web sites were cited, and ranged 0-26 web sites in a course. The most popular web sites cited were <http://ashoka.org> (six times), <http://redf.org> (six times), <http://fuqua.duke.edu/centers/case> (five times), <http://schwabfound.org> (four times), <http://blendedvalue.org> (four times), <http://skoll.socialedge.org> (three times), <http://socialent.org> (three times), and <http://se-alliance.org> (three times).

Conclusion

In conclusion, social entrepreneurship is evolving. It is being held up as the solution to some of our most serious unsolved dilemmas. Both the survey and syllabi content analysis on the state of social entrepreneurship education demonstrate the wide diversity among those who teach entrepreneurship, both in the direction and development. Approaches vary widely based on background of the instructor, college or school location, and their perspective. While some may say this creates a fractional approach and divergence in theory and practice, in reality it the strength of social entrepreneurship because it allows for and encourages creativity and innovation in application. However, this breadth continues to expand. Can SE survive trying to be all things to all people? Clearly not. Therein lies the central conundrum we face today.

Future directions[3]

Where do we go from here? From a research perspective, this work is still very much in its preliminary stages, despite the size of the samples. The results presented above suggest that our initial suspicions seem reasonable. We are indeed seeing remarkable breadth in what is taught in SE courses and how it is taught. We are also seeing a parallel breadth in the mental models of SE instructors. At this early stage of the field's life cycle, such breadth is a strength. However, the breadth of mental models may even be growing. How can we move forward?

We need to have a much better sense of what content and what methods are most productive (Of course, we also need a better understanding of where those best practices are generalizable and where they are contingent on students and other contextual factors).

We have seen tantalizing hints that the instructor's mental models plays an important role here. If we are to develop a social entrepreneurial mindset, then the students' mindset will likely reflect that of their instructor. Our next project will begin to test those links more explicitly.

We thus intend to survey instructors with an instrument designed specifically to assess the interrelationships between their mental models (again, e.g. mental prototype of “social entrepreneur”) and pedagogical choices.

What about implications for teaching? We also noticed a relative lack of experiential pedagogy used by respondents in our sample, contrary to the usual norms in entrepreneurship classes. It is increasingly clear that intensive experiential learning is essential to nurturing a truly entrepreneurial mindset. It might thus be extremely useful to assess the impact of differing pedagogies on the mental models of students. For example, what moves prospective social entrepreneurs from a more novice mindset to a more expert mindset? This is absolutely central to entrepreneurship education; should that not also be true for SE?

This argues strongly for large-scale longitudinal research that examines a wide variety of students, instructors and pedagogies to assess social entrepreneurial learning, perhaps comparing SE classes to other courses (such as mainstream entrepreneurship classes). Additionally we should use additional standardized instruments like the social entrepreneurship scale of Carragher (2013).

Similarly, consider the infrequency of course coverage of technology and innovation found here, despite their central role in sustainable entrepreneurship. This suggests strongly that an ideal comparison group would be self-identified “sustainable” entrepreneurship classes. As such, we will add a large sample of respondents who self-identify their courses as “sustainable” as opposed to “social”.

However, this also raises the deeper question of a valid, reliable dependent variable, such as the expert mindset for social entrepreneurs. Following the lead of Mitchell et al. (2000), it would be very useful to develop an instrument that indicates a relatively novice SE script versus a relatively expert SE script.

Future research should also examine differences in social entrepreneurship across cultures and countries (Carragher, 2011; Carragher et al., 2010; Carragher and Carragher, 2006). For instance if we compared perceptions of social entrepreneurship in China, Lithuania, and the USA (Carragher et al., 2003, 2009) would the results be similar across the countries or what about if one looked at social entrepreneurship in Africa, Asia, and North America (Carragher et al., 2004, 2008) would the results be similar or different? Research should also examine the impact that social entrepreneurship can have on other attitudes and behaviors such as vengeance seeking behaviors (Carragher and Michael, 1999), quality management (Carragher and Carragher, 1996a, b), creativity (Wu et al., 2012), managerial perceptions (Lester et al., 2010; Parnell and Carragher, 2001), or knowledge transfer (Li-Hua, 2007a, b).

In sum, it appears that like the field of entrepreneurship (Carragher and Paridon, 2008/2009), understanding how social entrepreneurs think will be both productive intellectually and valuable practically. A better understanding of how they learn to think that way will be an exciting, productive domain for the foreseeable future. The authors welcome comments and suggestions how we might facilitate the reader's own work in this vital domain.

Notes

Research is nascent on applying neuroscience to studying entrepreneurial cognition (Krueger and Welppe, 2008).

Seminal SE thinker/consultant Jere Boschee offers a fascinating history, available at:
<http://tinyurl.com/boschee-history>

Moving away from our specific focus on learning and education, we propose the more ambitious research recommendations of following the lead of existing large random-sample databases or to add SE measures to such databases as PSED, GEM and the Kauffman Firm Survey.

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