

Modes of Being: Astonishment and openness in Entrepreneurship Education

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Abstract

This paper stems from a two-year phenomenological action research project named Innovative and Entrepreneurial Formation (Bildung) in Professional Bachelor Education. The paper explores an entrepreneurial teaching experiment aimed at combining educational ideals of entrepreneurship education with educational ideals necessary to become a professional nurse. The educational ideals aimed for is sensitivity, imagination and courage to act. Through phenomenological analysis of one teacher's lived experience description and a phenomenological interview with a student participating in the teaching experiment, the paper inquires into modes of Being among students participating in the experiment from an ontological perspective. Furthermore, the paper investigates how these modes of Being can relate to entrepreneurial as well as professional purposes. By that, the teaching experiment is an example of a cross-fertilization between entrepreneurship education and professional education that

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allows both to grow. The analysis reveals astonishment as a central existential experience of Being, while participating in the specific teaching experiment. The study also shows a phenomenological association between astonishment and openness, which entrepreneurship educators have searched for pedagogies to establish.

Keywords

entrepreneurship education, lived experience, existential, being, nursing

Introduction

What happens when entrepreneurship education is integrated in the curriculum of a professional education? Which modes of Being comes to presence through entrepreneurship education in practical professions? Moreover, how can we methodologically grasp and describe the Being of students of practical professions, such as nursing, participating in entrepreneurship education? These questions initiated a phenomenological action research project focusing on modes of Being among entrepreneurship education students. We use Being inspired by and in line with Heidegger (1962), who uses capital letter to indicate a difference between ontic being an ontological Being, the latter referring to ways human *Being* can be called forth while *being* engaged in the world. The action research project had both development and research objectives (Lewin, 1946; Reason, 2015), and involved several professional welfare educations (nursing, pre-school teaching and diacony). The tradition of entrepreneurship education for nurses is thin, and despite the research of Neergaard (2021), Neergaard et al. (2022), Salminen et al. (2014) and Boore and Porter (2011) there is relatively sparse literature on entrepreneurship education within nursing. Hence, nursing is the particular case for this paper. The didactical and pedagogical development objectives were to enhance sensitivity, imagination, and courage to act as educational ideals through a number of teaching experiments. These ideals are difficult to grasp and formalize in education, but also key, both in entrepreneurship and nursing (Herholdt-Lomholdt, 2022).

As part of this overall project, the research objective of the present paper is to examine modes of *Being* among students, taking part in teaching experiments where educational ideals as sensitivity, imagination, and courage to act are unfolded in the “classroom”. We suggest that such an approach is highly needed, when entrepreneurship education is broadened into new disciplines that may question the purpose of learning entrepreneurship. We also propose that the significant role of experience-based pedagogies and lived experience learning calls for an existential understanding of the role of Being in entrepreneurship education. This paper identifies and explores modes of Being arising from one teaching experiment and investigates how it relates to entrepreneurial and professional ways of Being in the world.

The understanding of Being basically relates back to philosophy and has been dealt with by a number of philosophers, such as Heraclitus, Kierkegaard, Sartre and Heidegger; the latter the most influential on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (Johannisson, 2018; Spinosa et al., 1997; Thrane et al., 2016). The approach to Being in this project, relies on Heidegger's (1962) ontological foundation of existential phenomenology, in which Being can be understood as a way in which humans are in the world. Being is, in this sense, linked to conditions in which we as humans find ourselves while being embedded in the world and in specific situations. By doing so, the paper takes an existential and ontological stance, instead of the more functional approaches to entrepreneurship education, that focus on how mindset, competencies, skills, knowledge, or identity building can be developed as an outcome of entrepreneurship education (Donnell et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Lackeus, 2014). Our ontological approach also differs from individual and psychological approaches to the existential dimensions of entrepreneurship education, by focusing on Being as an ontological way humans are intertwined with their world. This paper aims to add to this field by examining ways in which students' "Being in the world" are called forth in entrepreneurship education. The central research questions are: Which modes of Being comes to presence, when student nurses participate in experience-based entrepreneurship education placed in the ordinary curriculum? Moreover, how can these modes of Being relate to entrepreneurial as well as professional purposes?

Theoretical Framing

In this paragraph we introduce three streams of literature which the paper relates to and builds upon. First, we show how a broadening of entrepreneurship calls for new reflections on both purpose and learning formats of entrepreneurship education. Second, we relate the paper to the experienced based learning tradition in entrepreneurship education and the recently introduced notion of lived experience in entrepreneurship education. Finally, we position the paper against previous existentially oriented research inspired by an ontological approach, which already exists in entrepreneurship research, but is rarely unfolded in entrepreneurship education research.

The Broadening of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education has over the years broadened in at least two dimensions. First, with respect to disciplines and professions it has spread horizontally from being seen primarily as a topic for economics, business, and engineering students (Iacobucci & Micozzi, 2012; Jones & Matlay, 2011), to be considered of value to almost any discipline and profession (Gibb, 2002; Ramsgaard & Blenker, 2021). This means that entrepreneurship education today is considered of value within education targeted at traditional public sector jobs, for example, nursing, preschool teaching, and social work. Consequently, research on entrepreneurship education also occurs within educational contexts other than traditional universities, for example, universities of

applied sciences, where welfare professions and professional bachelor-level education often are placed (Ramsgaard & Blenker, 2021).

Second, entrepreneurship education has broadened vertically. From being targeted primarily at higher education, it has spread to far more educational levels, all the way from kindergarten, over primary school to higher education (Hoppe et al., 2017; Liguori et al., 2019), accentuating new purposes for entrepreneurship education which are quite different than mere venture creation.

Such broadening of entrepreneurship education from being primarily a business topic to other professions and disciplines, and the transfer of entrepreneurship education to a full range of educational levels have consequences when it comes to question of which purposes, ideals, and practices entrepreneurship education and the research that studies it should focus on. The broadening has also opened for new and fruitful critique of entrepreneurship education for promoting masculine ideals, creating social injustice and climate problems, for basing itself on a neoliberal agenda based on extreme individualism and over-homogenized approaches to teaching (Berglund et al., 2021), leading to a McDonaldization (Hytti, 2018) of the discipline. Thus, in the best cases this broadening and critique also brings constructive and sustainable hope to the table (Dodd et al., 2022). In this way context matters in entrepreneurship education and research because it shapes understanding and influences learning (Thomassen et al., 2019; Welter, 2011). The dual broadening process has also led to a need for clarification when it comes to purposes and processes of entrepreneurship education, where both didactics and pedagogy needs to be reconsidered when different kinds of students are to be served (Blenker et al., 2012; Gibb, 2002; Lackéus, 2015). Hence, this development has led researchers to distinguish between a narrow understanding of entrepreneurship education aiming at new venture creation and a broad enterprise education understanding, focusing on enhancing broader forms of entrepreneurial life skills, or even rather general life skills, sometimes labelled as enterprising behavior or entrepreneurial mindset (Hoppe et al., 2017; Hytti & O’Gorman, 2004; Jones & Iredale, 2010; Komulainen et al., 2011). This paper positions itself within such a broad approach to enterprise education, by being focused on the education of welfare professionals that are not oriented towards new venture start up. The price of broadness seems to be a fragmented research field with lack of consensus on content and purpose (Fayolle, 2013; Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2020; Pittaway & Cope, 2007).

Experience Based Learning and the Notion of Lived Experience

Despite disagreement, elements of convergence appear in entrepreneurship education. When it comes to basic learning approach there seems to be a consensus, often inspired by Dewey (1938) and Kolb (2014) that experience based learning is central for entrepreneurship education, or perhaps is the guiding light of entrepreneurship education (Hägg & Kurczewska, 2020). Pedagogical development in entrepreneurship education seems highly inspired by the combination of action and experiences, often leading to the conclusion that students must get out of the classroom and learn through practical

doing to gain real-world experiences (Motta & Galina, 2023). However, while most educational entrepreneurship tends to arrange for external projects and action, and focus on experiences outside the classroom, we must assume that learning experiences also are created within the classroom. This paper focuses on experiences taking place inside the classroom and within the student's ordinary professional-focused curriculum.

With in the experienced based learning approach to entrepreneurship education, particularly the notion of "lived experience" has gained traction (Berglund, 2007; Cope & Watts, 2000; Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2020). When it comes to experience-based learning, this paper agrees with these positions considering lived experiences as important gateways to learning, especially when the learning, as in this case, touches existence.

Hägg & Kurczewska (2020) suggest relying on an empirical phenomenological approach to promote educational interplays between primary and secondary experience, as phenomenology "focuses on understanding the essence of experiences as they manifest themselves in the consciousness" (p. 141). We also agree that phenomenology has much to offer when it comes to educational practices that focus on reflection on experience.

Ontology and Being in Entrepreneurship Education

There are many ways to a broad and experience-based approach to entrepreneurship education, and thus need for a focused differentiation and positioning the paper. The following will position the paper within research focusing on existential aspects of entrepreneurship education, and particularly those that study the ontological dimensions of Being in entrepreneurship education.

Within learning theory, we find a tradition of existential learning research not focusing on what the teacher and the school finds important. Instead, this tradition seeks non-instrumentally (Ronkainen et al., 2021) to train students to develop their own particular approach to life (Frick, 1987). This approach has found its way into entrepreneurship education, focusing on how personal meaning and growth can emerge from experiences with heightened awareness. Neergaard and Robinson (2020) have studied how an existential approach to entrepreneurship education can support the agency of entrepreneurship students through significant learning experiences and self-reflection. This tradition is dominated by a social-psychological approach to existence and learning.

Others, both within general management (Scharmer, 2009), social innovation (Kahane, 2004), entrepreneurship research in general (Johannisson, 2018; Spinosa et al., 1997) and entrepreneurship education specifically (Thrane et al., 2016) have established an existential approach more oriented to the ontological question of entrepreneurship as a way of Being.

Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus's book "Disclosing New Worlds: Entrepreneurship, Democratic Action, and the Cultivation of Solidarity" (Spinosa et al., 1997) is pivotal in establishing this tradition. Inspired by Heidegger they take an ontological turn on

entrepreneurship, suggesting that entrepreneurship is a particular form of Being, where we encounter the world as practices that are either immediately meaningful or disharmonious. Entrepreneurs have a way of being sensitive, and openly hold-on-to and dwell on anomalies in our ways of organizing and living our lives. This form of entrepreneurial disclosive Being is not analytical, detached and passive, but a process of personal involvement and practical experimentation from which entrepreneurs can offer new ways to think and act. Ontological dimensions of Being are at the center of this approach.

In a later work [Dreyfus and Kelly \(2011\)](#) elaborate on situations of Being where experiences are meaningful in themselves, described as moments where ‘all things are shining’ and call upon us as human beings. This opening aspect of the entrepreneurial discloser is elaborated as a Being-open towards a call from life itself and it involves a receiving and listening attitude, letting the situation reveal its own meaning and letting meaning call action forth.

In entrepreneurship research [Spinosa et al. \(1997\)](#) have inspired [Johannisson \(2018\)](#) to study entrepreneurship through an ontology of becoming an entrepreneur by “living it”, letting it under the skin and embodying it. Johannisson suggests the term ‘enactive research’ when researchers “come out” as activists and “adopt the being of an entrepreneur” (p193) and use this experience for experimentation and ‘dwelling’ reflection on the field. [Popp and Holt \(2013\)](#) use Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus’ idea of disclosing for a discussion of entrepreneurial opportunities and creative imagination to portray entrepreneurial situations where you find “yourself and the world anew” (p. 19). The fields of entrepreneurship education and learning have found inspiration in the disclosing approach. [Hjorth and Johannisson \(2007\)](#) use it to stress the role of openness towards becoming and personal transformation in entrepreneurial learning processes. [Thrane et al. \(2016\)](#) use the approach didactically to construct a framework for entrepreneurship education where students work on disharmonies from their own everyday practice, and through involved experimentation, seek entrepreneurial projects closely related to the student’s own knowledge, interests, and beliefs.

In this quite varied research on ontology and Being in entrepreneurship education we see a dialectic between the active disclosing aspect on the one hand and the receiver of a call from the world itself on the other hand. Entrepreneurial action happens through a dialectical movement between a call coming from the world, a specific situation or from other people and a world discloser who listens, participates, and engages in the creation of meaningful action. Nevertheless, where former research in entrepreneurship education has been focusing on the disclosing and action side of this dialectic, this paper and its teaching experiments focus mainly on the other side, namely the world-receiver.

Following the three lines of thought outlined above, the paper will lean on a broad understanding of entrepreneurship oriented towards non-business students in welfare studies. The paper also positions itself within an experience-based learning approach to entrepreneurship education, accepting that experiences also take place within the classroom. Finally, the paper position itself within, and seek to contribute to the

relatively sparse literature on ontology and being in entrepreneurship education by focusing on what happens when modes of Being related to sensitivity, imagination, and courage to act are being trained in the classroom.

Project Design

In the following we contextualize the paper, by describing the research setting and educational context.

Within our specific context of welfare educations, entrepreneurship education is typically offered as an extra-curricular activity targeting a few particularly interested students. Neergaard et al. (2022) showed in their study of a three-day entrepreneurship camp in nursing education, that student nurses have limited knowledge of entrepreneurship and have difficulties seeing meaningful connections between entrepreneurship and nursing. A finding confirmed by other studies among students as well as graduated nurses throughout the last decade (Boore & Porter, 2011; Herholdt-Lomholdt, 2018). As researchers and educators in nursing education, we have been challenged by the trends and political demands to teach entrepreneurship to young people - mainly girls - who have chosen to become nurses. The gap between traditional purposes of entrepreneurship such as venture creation on the one hand and the hopes and dreams for future jobs that exist among the nursing students are enormous. As educators our primary obligation is to enhance nursing students' knowledge and practice in nursing – that is, to strengthen the development of knowledge, skills and values related to caring for patients. At the same time, we are obliged to offer teaching activities aimed at entrepreneurship, which neither we nor the nursing students have considered immediately relevant. Nevertheless, as educators and researchers we also acknowledge that the skills and attitudes connected to and described by researchers positioned in a broad approach to entrepreneurship education, could have great value and is most needed to improve care (Çulha et al., 2017). On that basis, and with a wish to offer relevant entrepreneurship education we initiated a two-year phenomenological action research project named: *Innovative and Entrepreneurial Formation (Bildung) in Professional Bachelor Education*, which had both development and research objectives (Lewin, 1946; Reason, 2015). Overall, the project involved several professional welfare education programs (nursing, pre-school teaching and diacony), but in this paper we focus on nursing education. The teaching experiments behind this paper focus on entrepreneurial educational ideals needed within the nursing profession, since the main purpose of offering and experimenting with entrepreneurship education is to support all nursing students in their development as both entrepreneurial professionals and as nurses. Different objectives of entrepreneurship education can be identified, but the objectives in this project are mainly ontological, focusing on spaces for students to be in the world in an entrepreneurial way. The teaching experiments, which will be further described later, aimed at stimulating students' entrepreneurial approach to the world rather than on learning certain methods or techniques as Neck and Greene (2011) suggest. Both the general project and the current paper, experiments with and inquiries

into learning activities which train students' sensitivity, imagination, and courage to act, and the involved teachers' creation of educational spaces where these ideals could come into play.

Methodological Approach

In this section, we show how the paper integrates in an overall action research project and how the specific methodology combines this action research logic with a phenomenological approach, where lived experiences of a teacher and a student are established as research data. Secondly, we introduce how the analysis is carried out. This project leans on a combination of existential phenomenology and action research. From existential phenomenology, we rely on phenomenological attitudes of openness, approaches concerned with lived experience descriptions as data sources, and phenomenological analysis as a non-method-driven, but thoughtful way of seeing into the heart of meaningful experiences (Hansen, 2015; Hansen & Sorrel Dinkins, 2016; McGuirk, 2017; Van Manen, 1990, 2014, 2017). The phenomenological methodology is chosen, as it has a special sensitivity for research concerned with ontological perspectives on Being (Van Manen, 1990, 2014, 2017, Van Manen & Van Manen 2021). The specific phenomenological approach is informed by the work of Max van Manen, who is a widely respected founder of the phenomenology of practice.

From action research, we rely on the principles of doing research *with* (not about) the involved teachers in an interwoven process of development and research through different learning phases (Bradbury, 2015; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Lewin, 1946; Reason, 2015), where the purpose is both thoughtful educational development and entrepreneurship education research. Action research was chosen, as the purpose of the project was twofold: (1) Developing entrepreneurship education in traditional welfare educations and (2) Inquiring into the Being of students participating in the developed teaching experiments.

The action research process has developed through three phases in which an action group of eight teachers from three different educational contexts at a University of Applied Science in Denmark participated as co-researchers in cooperation with two researchers. In this paper we concentrate on an experiment taking place at a nursing education. The teacher from nursing education had more than five years of teaching experience. Both researchers were also engaged in nursing education.

The three phases of the action research process, which all involve development and research, are illustrated in Figure 1 and further described in the following.

Phase 1: Planning and Describing the Teaching Experiments

In phase one, all teachers planned and described one teaching experiment each, placed in the students' ordinary curriculum. Every teaching experiment aimed at the educational ideals of sensitivity, imagination, and courage to act. In this phase, teachers found inspiration in entrepreneurship literature, pedagogical literature, philosophies of

teaching, their own experience, and dialogues with the rest of the group. The planning phase was documented in written descriptions of the experiments, their purposes, theoretical and experiential backgrounds, and expected outcomes and reactions from the students.

The experiment used as case in this paper, is a 4-h long lesson on Lave and Wenger's theory of social learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lessons which are a part of the ordinary curriculum of nursing education. Instead of giving a traditional lecture on the topic, the teacher invited the students to participate in a social learning activity, where students in groups learned, tried out and later developed yoga exercises. The lessons ended with common reflections on the topic, the process, and the students' experiences of participation in the experiment.

Phase 2: Doing and Investigating the Teaching Experiments

In phase two, all teachers tried out their teaching experiment. The teaching experiments were observed by a researcher. After the experiment, the teacher, and the researcher each wrote a phenomenological lived experience description (van Manen, 1984, 1990) of impressions from the experiment. These lived experience descriptions, as well as phenomenological interviews with one to four students from each teaching experiment, are the empirical material of the overall project.

In this paper we concentrate on a teacher-student pair, by focusing on a dataset involving one lived experience description, written by the teacher developing the yoga experiment and one phenomenological interview with a student participating in the experiment. This particular experiment was chosen as a strong single case because of

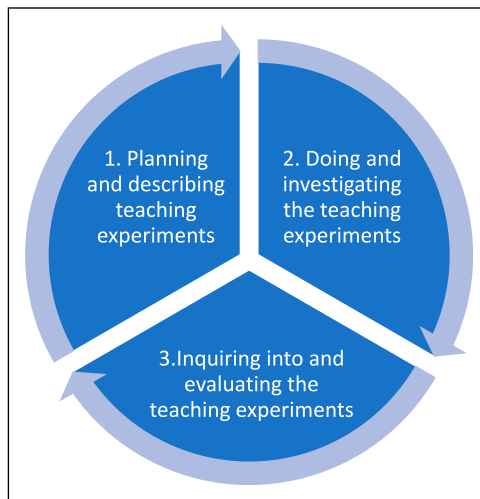


Figure 1. The action research process.

the impression it made on both the teacher, the students, the observer, the action group as a whole, and us as researchers. Moreover, it was chosen as it was phenomenologically deep and raised issues of Being, which were recognizable in other experiments as well.

In preparing and conducting the interview with the student, [Kvale and Brinkman's \(2015\)](#) descriptions of the semi-structured life world interview inspired us. We developed a semi-structured interview guide and asked questions about the lived experience of being a student in the experiment. As an example, the student was asked: "Please tell me about a situation from the lessons that made an impression on you?"

Phase 3: Inquiring into and Evaluating the Teaching Experiments

In phase 3, a phenomenological analysis as well as evaluations and reflections on the experiments were carried out in the group. The analysis presented in the following sections unfolds as a phenomenological unpacking of the teacher's lived experience description and the phenomenological interview with a participating student.

Analytical Approach

The analytical process unfolds in four phenomenological steps inspired by [van Manens' \(1984, 1990, 2014\)](#) recommendations for writing and analyzing phenomenologically. Van Manen suggests that:

The human science researcher is not just a writer, someone who writes up the research report. Rather, the researcher is an author who writes from the midst of life experience where meaning resonates and reverberates with reflective being. Sensitive phenomenological texts reflect on life while reflecting life.

([van Manen, 2014](#), p. 391)

Therefore, first, a lived experience description from a teacher's perspective of the chosen teaching experiment is constructed in its whole.

Second, the analysis went through an initial reflection. As the overall research question was: *Which modes of Being comes to presence, when student nurses participate in experience-based entrepreneurship education placed in the ordinary curriculum?* The second analytical step concentrated on identification of modes of Being arising through the experiment. In this second analytical step astonishment and openness was identified as findings in the study, as they rose as ways of Being, coming to presence through the teaching experiment.

Since astonishment and openness in the initial analysis arose as ways of Being, the third step of the analysis was a phenomenological and thoughtful dwelling on main characteristics of the specific experiences of Being. As required in phenomenological studies, this analytical part deepens the findings of astonishment and openness as ways of Being, by asking the following analytical questions: *What is it like to be astonished?*

And how can we describe the possible connection between Being astonished and Being open as it comes to presence through this specific teaching experiment?

Fourth, the analytical phase ended with a phenomenological inspired discussion of the characteristics and possible values and limitations of astonishment in entrepreneurship education situations. In this part, we returned to a discussion on the overall research question: How can these identified modes of Being relate to entrepreneurial as well as professional purposes?

In this way the full analytical process was documented, not just the main findings. This is where phenomenology differs as a method, as the text, loaded with evocative examples and both present and latent meanings, is a central part of the findings.

Results of the Phenomenological Analysis

In the following the four steps of the phenomenological analysis will be presented. First a lived experience description, written by the teacher involved in the yoga experiment, will be presented. Secondly an initial analytical reflection follows, aiming at identification of modes of Being raising among the students participating in the experiment. Thirdly a phenomenological analysis of the characteristics of the identified modes of Being is carried out. The fourth part of the analysis unfolds by putting the identified modes of Being in perspective to phenomenological literature.

Walking through the door in astonishment

In the following, a lived experience description is constructed in its whole, as the first part of the phenomenological analysis. The lived experience description is written by the teacher in charge of the chosen teaching experiment.

It's an early Wednesday morning at the beginning of November. I open my eyes after only a few hours of sleep. For the whole night, I feared not hearing the alarm. My thoughts wander: How will the students react to today's teaching?

On my drive to campus, I can feel butterflies in my stomach. Step by step, I imagine how the 36 students will react. I am excited and hope to create a good experience full of learning.

Today's teaching will take place in a movement hall instead of in normal auditoriums. The setting is not familiar to the nursing students and me. My thoughts center on didactical and pedagogical planning. I hope the students will trust that today's learning objectives can be reached in ways other than those with which they are familiar.

Arriving at campus, there are only a few cars. I walk through an empty and quiet campus and lock myself into the movement hall. It's a big, empty, and oblong room with bright wooden floors. It smells a bit like a gym. The floor looks nice and clean. I quickly spot a big

mat next to the door. A sign indicates that no shoes are allowed here. On the walls, I see different posters illustrating the human body: muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

I imagine how the room can invite and motivate students to give themselves to learning in a new way. I turn on some peaceful piano music. I hope to create a calm and positive atmosphere. My shoulders lower immediately. It's exactly the atmosphere I hoped for.

The first couple of students arrive. They look amazed and surprised. Some of them ask, "Is this the right room?"

I welcome them and ask them to take a seat on a yoga mat. The students walk calmly and curiously around, investigating, until they finally take a seat on a mat. This entrance repeats with each student. More students excitedly ask what is going to happen. More students walk around with curiosity. The first arriving students shout to the later arriving students to take off their shoes.

I begin by introducing the plan. Today, the students will complete four small exercises inspired by the world of yoga. Some students laugh, others smile, and several look at me with a curious and investigating glance. A few of them look rather skeptical.

I have their full attention.

I give the students a small pep talk. We discuss multiple ways of learning, and I try to convince the students that the learning objectives for today regarding situated learning in communities of practice can possibly be reached through exercises instead of traditional teaching with a blackboard. I challenge the students to break with norms when it comes to the practices of learning. I emphasize that everyone has relevant experiences, prerequisites, and competences that can be of value during the day. Some students nod and smile. The atmosphere is, in a way, redemptive.

I divide the students into groups of three. The groups are composed by considering the students' yoga level: beginner, lower intermediate, and experienced. I hope the small groups and random composition call forth a desire to challenge routines and habitual thinking. I hope the students will do experiments and that they will learn from each other in small fellowships. As an inspiration, I show the students a couple of yoga exercises. The students look at me with curiosity while repeating the exercise. A few laughs and smile back to me. Wow... this is really happening! Surprisingly, I find it natural to act like a yoga teacher.

With inspiration from a PowerPoint presentation with different yoga exercises, the groups are given some time to practice different kinds of exercises. Each group finds a small area in the hall. In a minute, they all try out different yoga exercises. I sense a bright and playful atmosphere. At the same time, piano music adds ease and elegance.

I walk around carefully and observe the groups. The students seem calm, curious, and careful toward each other. Many of the students learn possible yoga positions from each other, and they show openness when it comes to learning from fellow students. It's

fantastic. Some groups need inspiration to continue, and I support them so that they can help each other enhance the yoga level of the group.

Then, I ask the groups to develop a little yoga series wherein all the members of the group are active. They are challenged to give the series a headline. This is for use when they later show the yoga series to their fellow students.

I sense a hiss going through the hall when I mention “the show!” I tell them that there is no right way to do this and that they are more than welcome to break the norms for yoga exercises.

One by one, the students throw themselves into the exercises in a playful way. The students hold their heads high and show great courage. It is as if they find this exercise transgressive—but in a good and exciting manner.

I continue to observe and visit the groups, and I challenge them to do experiments, use humor, and break norms for yoga. At the same time, I praise and acknowledge their good work. I sense a relaxed and safe atmosphere. The students are curious and creative and give 100% of themselves.

It’s time for the show. Most of the students sit on their mats—ready and waiting. One of the groups asks me to play the music louder. I give a sign; they can begin by presenting the headings of their yoga series and thereafter show their series to their fellow students. With pride, the groups present their headings and yoga series. Both spectators and practitioners laugh at each other in a loving way. After every presentation, everyone applauds. What a culmination. I am filled with joy and pride.

Identifying Modes of Being

As a second step in the phenomenological analysis, the analytical question raised here was: Which kinds of Being come to presence through this lived experience description of the teaching experiment? Remembering, that Being in this project is understood ontologically and refers to the way in which the students Being are called forth, while participating in the teaching experiment. In the following section, the words are given to the lived experience description. Later a voice from one participating student will be added.

The first thing this teacher noticed is the way in which the students enter the movement hall. The students all stop at the doorstep, looking a bit surprised or even doubtful, as if they think: Is this really the right place? Some of the students ask by words. Other students just stop for a short while, looking skeptically at the room, the teacher and their fellow students already placed on yoga mats without shoes on. This stop in the door might not be for more than a second, but it seems to repeat itself while the students arrive. Through the above description, the teacher uses different words to describe the student’s entrance. The teacher uses words such as hesitating, amazed, doubtful, and surprised. Later, in a dialogue with the teacher, she tries to capture the

students' stoppage in the door by using the word *astonished*. All the small signs of curiosity, skepticism and doubt are gathered by the teacher in this one experience of being astonished. The way in which all the students make a sudden stoppage in the door, the overall skepticism about whether this is the right room, the hesitation when it comes to crossing the doorstep is described by the teacher as signs which altogether can be comprehended as signs of astonishment.

In the Cambridge dictionary, astonishment is linked to words such as surprise, shock, and hesitation, similar to the words used by the teacher in her lived experience description. As the observer of the teaching experiment also recognized this description of the students, *astonishment* seems to be an interesting way to frame the students Being while entering the movement hall and teaching experiment.

Secondly, the teacher wonders about the changes happening to the students through the teaching experiment. The teacher describes how the students at first transform from standing skeptical in the door, to be the ones sitting on the yoga mats welcoming the next students into the room and guiding them to take off their shoes. Later again the teacher realizes that the students change once again as they throw themselves into the unfamiliar yoga exercises with laughter and play. At this point, the teacher even writes that the students give themselves 100% and that they all seem to open up towards each other, towards possibilities of learning with- and from each other, towards the strange yoga experiment, and to the present teaching and learning moment as such. This movement from skepticism and doubt at the doorstep to an overwhelming *openness* towards the absolutely unfamiliar yoga experiment is a source of joy and pride for the teacher. At the same time, it's a movement which both the teacher and we as researchers deeply wonder about.

How did it happen? And could there be a link between the student's sudden stoppage in the door, being surprised, and their following openness towards the teaching experiment?

Phenomenological insights: What is it like to be astonished?

In the following, a third step into the phenomenological analysis will be taken. In this part, the aim is to take a step deeper into the experience of Being in the above teaching experiment, by asking: *What is it like to be astonished? And how can we describe the possible connection between Being astonished and Being open as it comes to presence through this specific teaching experiment?* When attending to these questions, we built on the findings from the initial phenomenological analysis and from there we revisit the two empirical sources, from which this paper stems. Through this third step of the analysis, four areas connected to experiences of Being astonished and a possible connection between Being astonished and Being open will be shown. These are:

- Astonishment as a *cleaning* of the *imaginary blackboard*,
- Astonishment leads to an *arousal* of *senses*,
- Astonishment *balance* between *fear* and *excitement*,

- Astonishment can be followed by an *openness* towards *the present* moment and *the still unknown*.

Next, these phenomenological insights are described and deepened.

Astonishment as a Cleaning of the Imaginary Blackboard. In the above lived experience description, we read about students stopping at the door and questioning whether the room is the right place. We also read about students who, just for a short while, were brought out of their comfort zones by the change of setting. In this sense, astonishment seems to be connected to a rupture with what the students are used to. In an interview with one participating student, this rupture was expressed in the following way:

Interviewer: What did you think while entering the movement hall?

Student: Oh... what am I doing here? Has something gone wrong? Isn't it possible to get a room where I can charge my computer? That was my very first thought: How on earth am I going to take notes... I really don't know. (Interview with participating student)

During the continuing interview, the student reflects on the experience of rupture as a sense of not knowing how to act or behave. Specifically, the student did not know how to take notes. During the interview, the student also reflects on the strengths of her habits, on how she was used to sitting behind a computer, receiving the words of a teacher, and taking notes. In this experiment, the students' habits were challenged from the very beginning by something as ordinary as another room without chairs, tables, and computer charging capacity. The student reflected on this experience by saying, "*I think that your imaginary blackboard was cleaned*" (Interview with participating student). Because of the very different setting, this student did not know how to behave. Normality was challenged, and along with this, many of her habitual imaginations disappeared.

Thus, Being astonished can, as expressed by the words of this student, be described as a sudden cleaning of "imaginary blackboards," leading to silent questions such as: "How on earth am I going to ...". The sudden cleaning of 'imaginary blackboards' means that most habitual thinking and acting are experienced as insufficient and therefore must be put aside. Suddenly, the student did not know what to do or how to behave in a seemingly ordinary lesson.

Astonishment Leads to an Arousal of Senses. Astonishment can also be described as a sensory experience. While entering the door, the students at first stopped. Shortly thereafter, the students moved around in a new and unexpected world in a sensible, curious, and careful way. All senses seemed to be sharpened as the students started to engage with the room, the mats, the teacher, and each other. The teacher writes about having the students' full attention. Moreover, the teacher shows how the surroundings in the movement hall also have the students' full attention.

Relying on these experiences, astonishment seems to be accompanied by a body that awakens. While at first holding their breath at the doorstep, the students enter the room and at that point, it seems like skepticism is replaced by curiosity. What is this place really? What is going on here? How is the feeling of this mattress? How does it feel to walk on the floor without shoes? Astonishment, starting with a stoppage, seems to be accompanied by a sharpening of all the senses and of an attentive, curious, investigating, or even wondering approach to a fascinating and unknown world.

Astonishment Balance Between Fear and Excitement. However, the new world is not solely fascinating. It is also frightening. The sharpening of all senses, which seems to be at stake while being astonished, is placed on an edge between fear on the one hand, and excitement on the other hand. The unknown and strange world in the movement hall seems to be both alluring and seductive and frightening, maybe even appalling. The students showed this by being extremely careful and hesitating while entering the movement hall as if they needed a great deal of courage and to take a deep breath to enter the room. It is like something pulls them forward and entices them to go in. At the same time, something holds the students back, making them cautious. As if the students, in the second they stand at the doorstep, consider whether they should pass or flee. As if the students need to dress with courage to enter the room and join the lesson. In that sense, astonishment can connect to an experience of being allured and frightened at the same time, like being pulled toward the room while considering the option of escape. Astonishment seems to happen just there, on the edge of being allured and frightened, on a line dance between fear and excitement.

Astonishment Can Lead to Openness toward the Present Moment and the Still Unknown. In the above lived experience description and following dialogues, the teacher wonders about a possible connection between astonishment and openness because she senses an openness among the students in the movement hall, which is unusual to her. In the interview with the participating student, the student also points to an experience of a connection between Being astonished and Being open. The student said:

When I entered the movement hall... it was like... your attention or arousal was awakened in a different way... so it ... it starts maybe in a quite confusing way ... oh ... you had to be awake in another way ...

I became more open towards that, which is to come ... and to be ... just present in the moment ... And to be aware, that you are pending, because you have no preconceptions on what is going to happen. You are forced to think out of the box and maybe be a bit more pending ... more listening ... (Interview with student)

What we find so interesting in this quote is the way in which the student shows that while stopping at the doorstep something happens. At first the student experiences an awakening of all senses. Then, while entering the room, this awakening is followed by an openness, which goes in different directions. The student talks about being open for

the present moment and for something which she still doesn't know, something which is coming to her. The student even tells us that to receive what is coming, she needs to be pending – to listen – and from there, something she could not imagine beforehand arises.

Later in the interview, the student said that on that particular day, she deeply learned, “*That it is okay **not** to know the answers from the beginning*” (Interview with student). On that specific day the student realized that it could be okay to enter an unknown territory without knowing what to do or how to behave, because she experiences, that it is possible to pend and listen and by that, it becomes possible to get around in an unknown territory.

In this way, astonishment in an educational setting seems to enhance an openness, to which neither the student nor the teacher was accustomed. An openness toward “not knowing all the answers,” of not even knowing how to act or behave, of not knowing what is to happen. An openness that made the students attentive, listening, and present, trying to sense how to be on this earth and in this room in the present moment.

Phenomenological Perspectives on Astonishment and Openness

So far, our phenomenological description and analysis have established four central characteristics of experiences of Being astonished as they arise within a specific entrepreneurial teaching experiment in nursing education. We have found that astonishment can be experienced as a *cleaning* of an “imaginary blackboard,” characterized by an *arousal* of senses, *balances* on the edge between fear and excitement, and can be associated with an *openness* towards the present moment and the hitherto unknown.

The fourth part of the phenomenological analysis is a theoretically enlightened discussion. We bring in the phenomenological philosophers Løgstrup, Hansen, and Heidegger to broaden our perspectives on astonishment in general and on the relationship between astonishment and openness in particular.

The Danish phenomenologist Løgstrup (1995) is relevant because of his phenomenological philosophy on astonishment in general and his reflections on the possibilities and limitations of astonishment with respect to openness, while both Hansen and Heidegger add to the philosophy of Løgstrup, by their deep descriptions of differences between astonishment and other kinds of openness as e.g., wonder.

On astonishment Løgstrup writes: “To be astonished is something sudden. It is a shock. Something unexpected happens; it is almost like an electric shock for the chest—and in this astonished shock, our eyes become wide open”. (Løgstrup, 1995, p. 65, authors' translation)

According to Løgstrup, astonishment is uneasy, like a shock, but at the same time, it is associated with enjoyment. On one hand, astonishment is experienced as a sense of worry, something we do not understand and cannot grasp. For the student participating in the experiment, this unease led to questions of “How on earth am I going to...”. In this way, astonishment is followed by a loss of orientation. The normal “imaginary blackboard” was not of much help, as the students put it. This loss of orientation made

the students fully attentive. As the students needed to reorient, they tried to sense the room and expectations in a new way, and by doing so, they became even more fully attentive. On the other hand, Løgstrup describes astonishment as associated with enjoyment. He even goes as far as to point to modern people as spiritually nourished by astonishment. As human beings, we love surprises and search for situations and news that can bring us to astonishment. This joy is seen in the lived experience description as the laughter and cheerfulness emerging among the students. Astonishment seems to live right there, on the edge between a sense of unease and a sense of joy.

This sense of a connection between openness and astonishment, as established in the analysis, is a key point in Løgstrup's work. He writes that when the shock of astonishment occurs, our eyes 'open wide' (Løgstrup, 1995, p. 65). The shock, balancing excitement and fear, unease, and joy, seems to be an entranceway into openness and bring forth a sense of not knowing. A sense of a clean "imaginary blackboard," as the student put it.

Relying on Løgstrup's phenomenology of astonishment and the above analysis, educational spaces where astonishment is a possible experience of Being, could be of value, when entrepreneurship educators, wish to break common practices and thoughts and pave the way for openness.

However, according to Løgstrup the big challenge is that astonishment itself is fleeting. Quickly, the unusual things that brought us into astonishment become the new normal. If the teacher brought the same students into the same hall the next day, it would already be trivial to them. The question, then, is: Should this teacher let the students jump between different rooms to create rooms for astonishment every day? Should we, as entrepreneurship educators, chase experiences of astonishment? Of course not, Løgstrup would say. The critical point is that astonishment itself is volatile. Further and more important with respect to entrepreneurship education, astonishment per se is not the purpose. It might just be a valuable doorstep in entrepreneurial learning processes. Instead, entrepreneurship educators (and perhaps even educators in general) search for ways to establish the openness that astonishment brings to the foreground. The openness to stay in an unknown territory, trying to listen and find a way through - an openness to "that, which is to come", as the student puts it.

In the teacher's lived experience description, she describes how astonishment is very quickly replaced by curiosity and an investigative approach among the students. Stopping at the doorstep, here promoted by astonishment, leads somewhere else. It leads to an openness, which could also be described as *wonder*.

Løgstrup (1995) describes astonishment as a sudden shout. When the shout has left, astonishment dies as well. However, in its dying, astonishment can be replaced by openness or even wonder. What entrepreneurship educators search for is the wonder that can follow from astonishment. According to Løgstrup, wonder is characterized by being ever growing, while astonishment is always dying.

Where does this lead us? Are the experiences of astonishment worthless in themselves? The teacher's lived experience and the student interview indicate that astonishment is certainly not worthless. It holds an experience of Being. However, if the

teacher and students only chase astonishment, they do not learn from it. Rather, it is the openness and wonder that rise as an extension, which carries educational value.

The Danish philosopher Finn Thorbjørn Hansen elaborates on the difference between astonishment, openness, and wonder (Hansen, 2007, 2012, 2019). Like Løgstrup, Hansen suggests that wonder contains more depth than astonishment, not only because of the short lifespan of astonishment, but also because of how we as humans relate to the world. When we are in what Hansen calls ‘true philosophical wonder’, our relationship to the world changes existentially and ontologically. When in wonder, we change from being outside of the situation to being embedded in it. Moreover, when we are in wonder, we experience being open to what calls upon us within this present moment (Hansen, 2018; Hansen et al., 2007).

Hansen’s distinction leans on Heidegger. In *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, Heidegger et al. (1994) differentiates wonder from astonishment by the way in which the world stands out. Astonishment is characterized by the unusual becoming present in the everyday and customary. Wonder, Heidegger writes, is different. In true wonder, everydayness opens and shows its unusualness. When we are in wonder, the trivial thing in life shows us how unusual, horrible, or wonderful it actually is.

Going back to the lived experience description, we can comprehend the students’ stoppage at the doorstep, as called forth by the unusual setting. This stoppage could be an expression of astonishment. Later, the students walk carefully around the room with their senses open. Both the student and teacher describe how attention is raised and how senses are open toward the mattresses, the floor, the exercises, and the teacher. That could be an expression of the students being in a wonder-based openness toward the unusualness of the usual. Even a yoga mat or some bare feet stands out as extraordinary.

The point is that although astonishment per se may not be of value in entrepreneurship education, it serves as an entrance into wonder, which again is a particular form of openness. The cleaning of the “imaginary blackboard”, characterizing astonishment, may pave the way for a turn away from students passively positioned *outside* the teaching activities to students being actively embedded *within* the teaching activities. At the same time, astonishment can support a turn from students feeling in control to students *letting go* of control. Astonishment, thus, holds a potential in entrepreneurship education, by the way in which it can pave a way for openness.

Discussion

In the following, we discuss how the ontological perspective on openness established above relates more specifically to entrepreneurship education, and welfare educations, such as nursing. We do this by reading an ontological understanding of openness into established studies of entrepreneurship education (Hagg & Kurczewska, 2020; Lackéus, 2014; Neck & Greene, 2011) and nursing (Benner et al., 2011; Delmar, 2018; Martinsen, 2000, 2018, 2020).

Lackéus (2014), found a relationship between uncertainty and ambiguity in the learning environment and the development of entrepreneurial skills. This is supported

by Neck and Greene (2011), who conclude that an important purpose of entrepreneurship education is to support students' ability to excel in "highly uncertain environments" (p. 55).

Also, in nursing education research, the ability to excel in environments characterized by uncertainty is underlined as important. Both Scandinavian (Delmar, 2018; Martinsen, 2000, 2018, 2020) and American (Benner et al., 2011) nursing theorists, show how nursing typically is delivered in unpredictable situations and therefore first and foremost depends on nurses' openness and sensitivity towards the patient and the present situation. The ontological understanding of openness constructed in our analysis supplements these suggestions from both entrepreneurship education by Lackeus, Neck and Greene and nursing theorists as Martinsen, Delmar and Benner as it explains how openness can be enhanced in educational settings. Sudden shocks can give rise to astonishment - and astonishment can lead to students letting go of control and being openly embedded in the learning activities. Placing 'sudden shocks' in curriculums must, however, be done carefully. Lackeus (2014) states: "Infusing uncertainty and ambiguity in learning environments can however be counter-intuitive for teachers, since it often results in complexity, student discomfort and institutional demands for more structure" (p. 390). We recognize the hesitation in the lived experience description where the teacher was very nervous beforehand. Thus, it is a challenge in educational settings, to endure—but also balance—students' possible discomfort, when they lose their footing, and their "imaginary blackboard" is cleaned.

At the same time, another obstacle must be discussed. Can we be sure that experiences of astonishment and openness among students in the classroom will be grasped as a valuable learning experience? If students are to learn from and value their experiences of openness and transform these experiences to learning outcome valuable outside the classroom, it is important to reflect on them directly. As Hägg & Kurczewska (2020) stress, learning by experience only happens when meaning is extracted from experience through afterthought. Therefore, an educational experience of losing a foothold, must be explicitly reflected upon and discussed to be of any learning value. Following a German philosophical tradition of distinguishing between *erlebnis* (as an in-the-moment experience) and *erfahrung* (as a learning from the experience through reflective thinking), Hägg & Kurczewska (2020) emphasize:

When only addressing the aspect of primary experience, we are left with just our instant sense of the experience and do not grasp the essential understanding of what we have experienced. To understand the possible consequences of what we have experienced, we have to add the element of thought, which is actualized through the use of reflective inquiry" (p. 135).

Hägg and Kurczewska suggest approaching the experience-based learning tradition in entrepreneurship education as an interplay and synthesis between primary (*erlebnis*) and secondary (*erfahrung*) experiences, with the purpose of challenging established knowledge "by inputs from new experiences" knowledge and reflections (2020, p. 139). The mediator between primary and secondary experiences is, according to

Hägg and Kurczewska, reflection. In the present study, we consider this reflection part in the teaching experiments to be too vague, mainly arising from the interviews we had with the participating students.

Up to now, the discussion has focused on openness as a valuable learning outcome in experience-based entrepreneurship education. A learning outcome initiated by a sudden shock in the learning environment, which gives rise to astonishment. Nevertheless, openness in entrepreneurship education can be considered as more than an outcome. Considering the movement from a shock, over astonishment towards openness *in* the classroom, it is also possible to say, that openness as a way of Being *in* entrepreneurship education, is a necessary condition for students to move from being outside the learning activities to being embedded and involved. In other words, openness arising as a way of Being in the classroom as entrepreneurship education unfolds, can be considered as necessary for students giving themselves to - and involve themselves in the experiments. Following that line of thought, Being open is both a possible ontological outcome - and an ontological condition for experience-based entrepreneurship education. To reach that kind of openness, astonishment as 'sudden shocks' placed and balanced in the curriculum, seems promising.

Conclusion and Further Perspectives

Throughout the last decade, entrepreneurship education has spread into disciplines that question its value and relevance. Nursing education is one of these educations with only sparse or no traditions for entrepreneurship education. Nevertheless, nursing, as well as other welfare professions today meet not only a political demand, but perhaps also a pedagogical obligation, to offer its own version of entrepreneurship education. This obligation calls for contextualization (Welter, 2011), through local re-thinking and 're-pedagogization' of entrepreneurship education (Ramsgaard & Blenker, 2021; Thomassen et al., 2019), that enables it to integrate with the purposes and values of the professions. This paper exemplifies how contextualizing can take place in nursing education. It describes a specific experience-based teaching experiment aimed to enhance ways of Being, which are considered valuable in both an entrepreneurship and a nursing tradition. The teaching experiment is an example of cross-fertilization between entrepreneurship education and professional education – allowing both to grow instead of letting one tradition colonize the other. Such contextualization of entrepreneurship education is a central task for future entrepreneurship education research development, not only considering nursing but also other disciplines with sparse interest or even resistance towards entrepreneurship education.

The specific teaching experiment, from which this paper stems, focused on the students' Being and was studied through a phenomenological and ontological inquiry. This paper showed that sudden shocks, placed with consideration in the curriculum can give rise to astonishment as a way of Being. Astonishment was further shown to be characterized by an experience of a sudden cleaning of the 'imaginary blackboard', a sense of standing on an edge between fear and excitement and as arousing the senses.

Moreover, the paper showed astonishment as volatile and primarily of pedagogical interest for its ability to pave the way for deeper forms of Being – named openness or wonder. Openness - towards others, the moment and the unknown – was, however, argued to be quintessential for both entrepreneurship and nursing education. This paper shows a phenomenological movement from ‘sudden shocks’ placed in the curriculum, through astonishment, to openness as a way of Being that entrepreneurship education research has often claimed as central for entrepreneurial learning and have been searching for pedagogies to establish in the classroom. The relationship between sudden shocks, astonishment, and openness in entrepreneurship education needs further exploration. In particular there is a need for further conceptual research to relate these forms of Being to both entrepreneurship and educational research.

Although it is tempting to describe this as a didactical one-way-street from shock through astonishment to openness, this is by far so simple. As sudden shocks in the learning process easily may give rise to negative emotions, these experiences need pedagogical scaffolding of student’s reflection processes, in order to be transformed into valuable learning experiences (Crosina et al., 2023). These more normative questions of how to didactically structure the movement from shock through astonishment to openness, and how pedagogically to support reflective learning processes is an interesting challenge for further pedagogical practice development and empirical entrepreneurship education research.

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