

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Necessity of entrepreneurship education: A research among entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs in Serbia**

**Nebojša Zakić<sup>1\*</sup>, Milan Stamatović<sup>2</sup> and Svetlana Stevović<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Entrepreneurial Business, Union University, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia Cara Dušana 62-64, 11000, Belgrade, Serbia.

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Management, Metropolitan University, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia Tadeuša Koščušskog 63, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia.

<sup>3</sup>Faculty for Ecology and Environmental Protection, 11000 Belgrade Cara Dušana 62-64, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia.

Accepted 24 January, 2012

**Entrepreneurship education field is very complex. Studies have shown that the effects of entrepreneurship education are mixed and contradictory and authors' opinions range from unconditional support to doubts into its justification. The study explores the entrepreneurship education perception of the existing entrepreneurs and of those who want to become entrepreneurs, whether it is necessary and adequate in their surroundings. The research has been conducted among 200 examinees on a Serbian municipal environment example. The research implications show the necessity of the entrepreneurship education and justification of its purpose, and the efforts should be directed towards its better quality and results.**

**Key words:** Education, entrepreneurs, potential entrepreneurs, Serbia.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Researchers have different views regarding the beginning of the entrepreneurship education. Katz (2003) has developed comprehensive chronology where economic and agricultural literature is included as well as the experiences, which date back from the 19th century, and the first college curriculum for entrepreneurs from 1947 on Harvard. Kuratko (2005) states the real entrepreneurship education in business schools in the USA started in the early 80's. According to Gibb (1993), the term 'Entrepreneurship education' was firstly used in the USA and Canada, while it was less used in Europe during the early 80's. One of the terms used, especially in the Great Britain, was the entrepreneurial education. However, the term entrepreneurship education prevailed

during the early 1990's. The term entrepreneurship education spread all over the world during the 1990's, business schools worldwide have introduced it into its curriculums, and a number of various courses for entrepreneurs exploded in order to educate them continuously.

Present entrepreneurship education curriculums are of great variety and differentiation, with different and contradictory approaches, which is confusing and makes it hard to compare and evaluate their effectiveness. A part of the problem derives from the fact the term 'entrepreneurship education' is comprehended differently among the authors.

According to Colton, (as cited by Garavan and O'Conneide, 1994), 'The major objectives of enterprise education are to develop enterprising people and inculcate an attitude of self-reliance using appropriate learning processes. Entrepreneurship education and training programs are aimed at stimulating entrepreneurship which may be defined as independent small business ownership or the development of opportunity-seeking

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\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [nebojsa.z@fpb.edu.rs](mailto:nebojsa.z@fpb.edu.rs),  
[nebojsa.z@sezam.com](mailto:nebojsa.z@sezam.com). Tel: +381112180271,  
+381(63)7059576.

managers within companies.' Within the definition, the author does not make differences between small sized business management and entrepreneurship. Programme creators who accept such and similar definition teach attendants of managing and operating with small sized companies, including goal setting and planning, organising, business conducting and controlling from the small sized business perspective.

Other authors such as Solomon et al. (1994) or Kirby (2002) make clear distinction between entrepreneurship and small sized business by focusing the entrepreneurship education on creation and development of business attempts, pointing out high profitability, fast growth and expedient outgoing strategies. This is in accordance with Carland et al. (1984) concept, who defines small sized business attempt as a business possessed and conducted independently; which is not dominant in the field and does not involve new marketing or innovation practices with respect to the definition of entrepreneurship attempt; and also which main goals are profitability and growth, while business operations are characterised by innovative strategic practices.

Broader definitions of entrepreneurship education can be found at Jameieson's (1984) or Fayolle's (2006). Entrepreneurship education in Jamieson's taxonomy (1984) involves: (1) education 'about enterprise' which deals with entrepreneurship conscientiousness and understanding; (2) education 'for enterprise' which deals with stimulating the attendants to begin their own business; and (3) education 'in enterprise' which deals with promotion of necessary skills and attributes for appropriate functioning, growth and development of the existing business. Fayolle (2006) defines entrepreneurship education in broad sense as a pedagogical programme or educational process about entrepreneur skills and attitudes, which involve development of certain personal qualities. The definition, similar to the previous one, is not strictly focused on creation of a new business but it covers broad variety of situations, goals, methods and learning approaches. In his research in 2005, Parker pointed out in this context, stating the importance of education and training for the future entrepreneurs since the author concluded the entrepreneurs do not learn fast and to great extent lean on the previous beliefs and experiences. These are the aspects of entrepreneurship education exploited in the presented research since it deals with the existing and potential entrepreneurs and we would put more emphasis on innovation (Zakić et al., 2009).

A fundamental problem of entrepreneurship education is whether entrepreneurship can be learnt. Debate on this issue still goes on. Saeed (1996) claims the entrepreneurship education can demonstrate only 'the process involved in being successful, but cannot create an entrepreneur as the individual is ultimately responsible for his /her own successes. According to Jack and Anderson (1999), entrepreneurship study represents both 'science'

and 'art', which means there are some entrepreneurship parts that can be learnt and creative entrepreneurship aspects that cannot be learnt. Dana (2001) thinks the question whether the entrepreneurship can be learnt depends upon the fundamental entrepreneurship's nature. The author discusses various entrepreneurship definitions and arguments; it is possible to train potential entrepreneurs to identify the possibilities, but it is difficult to teach them the art of creating the possibilities. It means the entrepreneurship according to Kirzner (identification of the possibilities) can be learnt but the entrepreneurship according to Shumpeter (creation of possibilities) cannot.

According to Willson (2008), the answer to the fundamental question is 'both yes and no'. Education plays crucial role in attitude, skills and culture formation – starting from the primary level. Entrepreneurship education provides the mixture of experimental learning, skill building and advancing the way of thinking. It is assumed the earlier and broader exposure to the entrepreneurship and innovation causes students' reflection about entrepreneurship career in the future more probable. Broader elaboration of why some people choose to study and to become entrepreneurs and others not would require consideration of entrepreneurial cognition and cognition perspectives (Milivojević and Stamatović, 2010).

Duening (2006), however, explains the question: Is it possible to learn entrepreneurship? This represents one of the tricky questions that sound profound but impossible to be answered in a satisfactory way. Attempting to answer the question gives it undeserved legitimacy. Entrepreneurship dwells in each one of us; in the same way as the ability to play a sport, for example golf. The aim of a golf instructor is not to make someone play golf as Tiger Woods, but to make the person the best golf player it can be. Thus, the goal of entrepreneurship education is to make those who learn about entrepreneurship the best entrepreneurs as they can be.

Entrepreneurship education has numerous critics. Bernstein (1977) states 'the entrepreneurship education demands high level of ideological consensus, and it is connected with badly coordinated and changeable symbolic control systems. It makes the starter's thoughts, feelings and values ready to be controlled and it sets up penetrated, imposed shape of socialisation in ambiguous system of beliefs and moral order. For Blankertz (as cited by From, 2006) 'the system has the semblance of logical consistency or even scientific salience – the conception of how reality should be constituted becomes reality itself'. From (2006), says the entrepreneurship education field regards the education as too much unproblematic, even naive. Entrepreneurship education is mainly perceived as (simple/easy) way of entrepreneurship's expansion and development, and the researches have shown the education was something barely more complex than simple way for achieving the desirable result.

It is necessary to distinguish disputes on entrepreneurship education justifiability, and extremes of negative attitudes stating it has no purpose as well as immoderately positive attitudes, which assign some kind of mythical character to it, with respect to the disputes and criticism on improvement of the education and innovation of the approaches, methods and models. However, in theoretical and research efforts which elaborate very complex subject, acquiring of knowledge on entrepreneurship education demands survey of their users, as well as an attempt to clarify numerous insufficiently explored areas.

This paper is about entrepreneurship education from the user's point of view. On an example of a concrete, local environment, opinions of the potential and existing entrepreneurs on entrepreneurship education are explored in this paper, where the existing conditions and specificities of Serbia, which is a country that has undergone transition, and Novi Sad, the province's centre, are taken into account. Affirmative or negative attitudes on entrepreneurship education provide valuable information whether and to what extent it is necessary and appreciated as significant to those involved in the entrepreneurship or plan to become entrepreneurs. It is assumed the entrepreneurship education is necessary for the modern society (regardless of the achieved development level), where the entire complexity of entrepreneurship education problem and opposed opinions are taken into account.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A focus of entrepreneurship literature is the educational influence on starting of a new business. The literature on this issue is in contradiction. As Yusuf (1995) and Birdthisle (2006) point out the positive effects, the authors such as Lee and Tsang (2001) find the negative effects. Morales-Gualdrón and Roig (2005) research has not proved the assumption that a higher academic level has a positive effect on the decision to start a new business. In a recent research conducted in Uganda, Byabashaija et al. (2010) have not confirmed the assumption that there was no growing attention in starting a private business among the entrepreneurship college graduates.

The question connected to the previous one was the question regarding the entrepreneurship education and accomplished performances. Entrepreneurship knowledge and skills are essential for successful entrepreneurship venture, which is broadly proclaimed in the literature. Drucker (1985) points out the people can learn to become entrepreneurs and act as entrepreneurs, as well as the importance of entrepreneurship practice in the existing business, not only in the new venture.

According to Cromie (1994), the less competent individuals in the core business operations skills should not be surprised if their business ventures were unsuccessful.

According to Beaver and Jennings (1996), the entrepreneurs must have excellent entrepreneurship skills since the key of small sized business failure is weak entrepreneurship competence.

The concept, that the entrepreneurship knowledge and skills development greatly depend upon the entrepreneurship and management education, prevailed among many researches. Rushing (1990) states the educational programmes may be important for the entrepreneur talent development within the population. According to Henry et al. (2003), entrepreneurship education and training lead to the development and improvement of some entrepreneurship elements. This generally positive image, widely proclaimed in the literature, resulted in the entrepreneurship education being assigned double benefit /value, both economic (creation of companies /businesses and growth) and personal (for example, generation of personal development and self-confidence) (From, 2006).

Value, the entrepreneurship education has in reinforcement of the marginalised groups, the poor, women in various contexts, the minorities and others in order to make them actively involved in the productive economic activities, should be specially taken into account. Idris (2009), regarding the female entrepreneurship in Malaysia, due to limited career possibilities in governmental and corporative sector, states women are encouraged to become business players. Education and training activities fall into measures conducted to support the female entrepreneurship.

General value has been assigned to entrepreneurship education, and it became important to the political decisions makers. Yendell's (2001), attitude calls for an action that 'without highly educated, creative individuals with an entrepreneurial mindset and access to enterprise skills, no government strategy for business creation will succeed'. Assumption, that the entrepreneurship education is the key for realisation of promised potential offered by the entrepreneurship, lies behind it. It is not surprising the entrepreneurship education has attracted great political interest in the last few years.

Unconditionally positive attitude about the entrepreneurship education suggests caution. One of the perspective's weaknesses is lack of appropriate theoretical researches (Watson, 2001). Autio et al. (1997), state the literature tries to connect systematically formal and traditional entrepreneurship education with entrepreneurship actions and accomplished performances is practically impossible. Honig (2004) points out that there are few empirical findings, which can help in creating modern and effective entrepreneurship education.

Holmgren et al. (2005) state the normative and naïve prescriptions are unhistorical and they neglect the complexity and variability of the existing educational and learning conditions. Critics investigate values and moral beliefs the entrepreneurship education implants and they point out that the entrepreneurship education represents

'complex set of problems for empirical research within educational settings, under actual conditions'. The authors fear the entrepreneurship education is a part of the constant neoliberal orientated restructuring process of educational system and a 'specific political /ideological activity'.

According to From (2006), entrepreneurship education effectiveness represents simplified 'input-output model, where the desired results are expected to be produced, if only the right content is put in and treated in the right way'. The fundamental problem with these types of instructions is they 'treat learning as it is conducted in social vacuum, while inversely, large number of social factors determine what is going to be materialised in the real learning process and what learning conditions are going to be provided'.

Some new researches cast down the light on this complex subject. Parker and van Praag (2006) study states that higher human entrepreneur capital and additional years of education result in better performances. According to these authors, in order to improve entrepreneurship performances, the power of extra education is higher when there are capital limits because education helps to alleviate these limits, which directly influences the performances.

Bhattacharjee et al. (2008) research connects founding and entrepreneurship venture performances with education. According to this research, there is positive influence of entrepreneurship education on survival of new companies. Relations are particularly important for the individuals who have started a business venture in sectors they were previously experienced in. The authors argue that individuals that are more educated desire to move from bad labour market conditions and choose self-employment, that is, entrepreneurship career independently from their actual human capital, especially because they can take care of their human capital depreciation in the existing circumstances.

It is necessary to clarify the nature of human capital from various points of view in order to start and practice business in different economy branches, and implication for entrepreneurs with different initial labour market conditions. Crucial questions regarding the entrepreneurship education through regular schooling, further knowledge and skill improvement of the individuals who have already become entrepreneurs.

The literature review tells us about the entrepreneurship education complexity and various contradictory issues, which will certainly be the subject of the future researchers. However, it is necessary to separate the questions on the necessity of entrepreneurship education in relation to volume, quality and effects of the education, analysis of the existing programmes and models or an offer of some new approaches to the entrepreneurship education. If the entrepreneurship participants, existing entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs-to-be, think they need entrepreneurship education, then the purpose of entrepreneurship education cannot be denied, and

attention should be directed towards satisfying the entrepreneurship participants in the best possible way.

Serbia is suitable for this kind of analysis due to its specificities. After the World War II, Serbia was a federal unit of SFR Yugoslavia, with social system. Since the production assets were in state, that is, public possession and private sector was reduced to small sized shops, the possibilities for entrepreneurship ventures did not exist in such conditions. During the 1990's social system disappeared, SFRY disintegrated and political and economical crisis appeared, which blocked the entrepreneurship development. Practically, market economy came in Serbia at the beginning of this millennium and it created possibilities for the entrepreneurship progress. Even though the entrepreneurship education started to appear at business colleges during the 1990's, it was in the last decade that uplifted. Business colleges started introducing independent entrepreneurship curriculums, or the entrepreneurship gained on its importance by curriculum alternation and introduction of certain subjects. As well, entrepreneurship and consulting training programmes have appeared. Unfortunately, the world's global economy crisis had strong influence on Serbian economy and it blocked the positive progress.

City of Novi Sad is the second largest city in Serbia and province's centre. Novi Sad is way beyond the Serbia's average regarding the economy development and educational institutions. The entire situation refers to this city as well. Therefore, hypothesis and the questionnaire in this research are in accordance with defined situation.

## METHODOLOGY

For this situation the following hypotheses are set:

H<sub>0</sub>: It is necessary to raise the level of entrepreneurship education, including education during the regular schooling and continuous entrepreneurship education, that is, permanent life education in order to conduct and develop independent business.

H<sub>1</sub>: Independent entrepreneurs do not have enough knowledge to run and develop their business successfully.

H<sub>2</sub>: Entrepreneurship education does not have adequate model for running independent business.

H<sub>3</sub>: Organised education of independent entrepreneurs does not exist on local level.

H<sub>0</sub> will be regarded proved if H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> hypotheses are proved. In order to provide necessary data to execute the projected research, the questionnaires created on specimen of 200 examinees for two categories are created: a) 100 unemployed examinees that intend to conduct business and therefore are called potential entrepreneurs, and b) 100 active entrepreneurs. The persons are chosen by random sampling method among the group of potential and active entrepreneurs from the territory of Novi Sad and surroundings – which means attention was not paid on their education, age, assets, social status, etc.

Hypotheses are tested by  $\chi^2$  tests – independence feature test in order to conclude whether H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> depend upon the features (upon the entrepreneur choice). By applying the appropriate test, that is,  $\chi^2$  test – independence feature test, and along the possibility of 95% it is verified if there was any difference in feature opinions.

**Table 1.** Contingency table (personal qualification necessary to for entrepreneurship).

Category of examinees	Availability of necessary physical features	Availability of entrepreneurship knowledge	Availability of assets	Availability of previous factor combination	Total
Potential entrepreneurs	7	6	23	64	100
Active entrepreneurs	1	4	21	74	100
Total	8	10	44	138	200

Source: Research (2010).

**Table 2.** Frequencies and  $\chi^2$  for the question No. 1.

Empirical frequencies ( $f_{ij}$ )	Theoretical frequencies ( $f_{ij}^t$ )	$\chi^2$
7	4.00	2.250000000
6	5.00	0.200000000
23	22.00	0.045454545
64	69.00	0.362318840
1	4.00	2.250000000
4	5.00	0.200000000
21	22.00	0.045454545
74	69.00	0.362318840
200	200	5.715546770

Source: Research (2010).

Tables of contingency are previously calculated in order to calculate the theoretical possibilities.

**RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

H<sub>1</sub>: Independent entrepreneurs do not have enough knowledge to run and develop their business successfully.

Question No. 1: Personal qualification for conducting the entrepreneurship.

Starting data: Numbers of rows m = 2, number of columns k = 4.

Table 1 is the contingency table and Table 2 is the table of frequencies and  $\chi^2$  for Question No. 1.

Table value for error risk  $\alpha = 5\%$  and number of freedom rate is r = 3 what makes:  
 $\chi^2_{(\alpha;r)} = \chi^2_{(0,05;3)} = 7,815$

The answer: Since it is  $\chi^2 = 5,71554677 < \chi^2_{(0,05;3)} = 7,815$  then H<sub>1</sub> is accepted, that is, it is regarded there is no difference in opinion feature, along the error risk of 5%, and it can be regarded the independent entrepreneurs do not possess

enough knowledge to successfully run and develop business.

H<sub>2</sub>: Entrepreneurship education does not have adequate model for running independent business.

Question No. 2: In your opinion, does an adequate model of entrepreneurship education exist in order to run the business independently?

Starting data: Numbers of rows m = 3, number of columns k = 2.

Table 3 is the contingency table and Table 4 is the table of frequencies and  $\chi^2$  for Question No. 2.

Table value for error risk  $\alpha = 5\%$  and freedom rate is r=2 what makes:  $\chi^2_{(\alpha;r)} = \chi^2_{(0,05;2)} = 5,991$

Answer: Since it is  $\chi^2 = 0,442151803 < \chi^2_{(0,05;2)} = 5,991$ , then H<sub>2</sub> is accepted, that is, differences in opinion feature (of potential and active entrepreneurs) is regarded as nonexistent, with error risk of 5%, and it can be regarded that there is no adequate model of entrepreneurship education in order to run independent business, according to the opinion of potential and active

**Table 3.** Contingency table (adequate model of entrepreneurship education).

Category of the examinees	Potential entrepreneurs	Active entrepreneurs	Total
No	87	90	177
Yes	0	0	0
I do not know	13	10	23
Total	100	100	200

Source: Research (2010).

**Table 4.** Frequencies and  $\chi^2$  for the question no. 2.

Empirical frequencies ( $f_{ij}$ )	Theoretical frequencies ( $f_{ij}^t$ )	$\chi^2$
87	88.50	0.025423728
90	88.50	0.025423728
0	0.00	0.000000000
0	0.00	0.000000000
13	11.50	0.195652173
10	11.50	0.195672173
200	200	0.442151803

Source: Research (2010).

entrepreneurs.

H<sub>3</sub> – Organised education of independent entrepreneurs does not exist on local level.

Question No. 3: In your opinion, does organised entrepreneurship education of independent entrepreneurs exist on the local level?

Starting data: Number of rows m=3, number of columns k=2.

Table 5 is the contingency table and table 6 is the table of frequencies and  $\chi^2$  for Question No. 3.

Table value for error risk  $\alpha = 5\%$  and number of freedom rate is  $r = 3$ , what makes:

$$\chi^2_{(\alpha;r)} = \chi^2_{(0,05;2)} = 5,991$$

Answer: Since it is  $\chi^2 = 0,391804097 < \chi^2_{(0,05;2)} = 5,991$  then H<sub>3</sub> is accepted, that is, difference in opinion feature (of potential and active entrepreneurs) is regarded as nonexistent, with error risk of 5% and it can be regarded that there is no organised education of independent entrepreneurs on the local level, according to the opinions of potential and active entrepreneurs. H<sub>0</sub> is

proved by proving H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> hypotheses.

## Conclusion

This research has provided valuable knowledge about the necessity of entrepreneurship education on the environmental example where entrepreneurship was developed, and necessity for such education existed. According to the potential and active entrepreneurs' opinions, the research has shown nonexistence of sufficient knowledge of independent entrepreneurs for running the independent business, adequate model of entrepreneurship education for running of independent business and organised education of independent entrepreneurs on the local levels. It means the enhancement of entrepreneurship education level is necessary, including education through the regular schooling and continuous entrepreneurs' education, that is, permanent life education.

The paper's focus is on the clients of entrepreneurship education. The bearers of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship schools and agencies for entrepreneurship training, volume and quality of their educational programmes, marketing efforts, influence in entrepreneurship community and society were not dealt with. In both Serbia and Novi Sad the volume and quality of entrepreneurship education in regular schooling and training courses for the entrepreneurs will undoubtedly

**Table 5.** Contingency table (adequate education of entrepreneurs).

Category of examinees	Potential entrepreneurs	Active entrepreneurs	Total
No	67	71	138
Yes	2	2	4
I do not know	31	27	58
Total	100	100	200

Source: Research (2010).

**Table 6.** Frequencies and  $\chi^2$  for question no. 3.

Empirical frequencies ( $f_{ij}$ )	Theoretical frequencies ( $f_{ij}^t$ )	$\chi^2$
67	69.00	0.057971014
71	69.00	0.057971014
2	2.00	0.000000000
2	2.00	0.000000000
31	29.00	0.137931034
27	29.00	0.137931034
200	200	0.391804097

Source: Research (2010).

rise. The research is unique in time and irreproducible, and concludes the entrepreneurship education is necessary and it cannot be done without it.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Today's constant and rapid market, technological, institutional and other changes causes the necessity for constant improvement of existing knowledge in every area of human activity, especially the one directed towards satisfying the market demands. In this sense, entrepreneurship cannot be the exception. Entrepreneurs are not born predefined for the job, but they become entrepreneurs. Development of the entrepreneurship knowledge and skills, attitudes and behaviours, and increase of the total entrepreneurship potential will demand involvement of educational process. It cannot be expected that the absence of educational activities directed towards the raise of potential and active entrepreneurs' business qualification, would produce better results with respect to practice of the activities. The research results have made evident that:

i) Contestation of entrepreneurship education purpose is pointless. Entrepreneurship education is essential for entrepreneurship population and for those who intend to become entrepreneurs. Reducing the entrepreneurship learning mainly through empiricism, attempts and errors, and gaining independent experiences without organised entrepreneurship education, means to relinquish

acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills and increase of entrepreneurship competence level to their improvisation and accident in a very complex and changeable business environment of the 21st century.

Attention and efforts should be directed towards making the entrepreneurship education better and productive instead of leading exhausting discussions whether the entrepreneurship education is necessary or not. In this sense, issues of close cooperation of business and educational subjects, educators' development, entrepreneurship education approaches which demand further researches and innovation, contents, curriculum, teaching pedagogy, research basis, cooperation, quality insurance become particularly important.

If entrepreneurship education is indisputably necessary and it cannot be done without it, the governments and other social and political responsible subjects and institutions on all levels must contribute to it. The society's neglect of entrepreneurship education is unacceptable. Entrepreneurship education field is still relatively young and therefore it is important and necessary that the support of the decision-makers is continuous in order to build in the entrepreneurship in a sustainable way in schools and universities, and supported through the informal educational system.

This millennium along with already passed first decade will probably include greater insecurity and competition among the companies and individuals more than ever. The 21st century companies must encourage entrepreneurship careers, founding and development of entrepreneurship ventures, which means the schools,

universities and institutions of higher education must provide support to those who opt for entrepreneurship. Continuous entrepreneurship education must be provided for the existing entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education is necessary, which has been proved in this paper, but everyone has to work on its improvement and development, and accurately observe researches and criticisms. It is a good idea to remind oneself of From (2006) words, who points out that if entrepreneurship education should 'have a real impact, aspects of both education and teaching will have to be taken into consideration and handled in a considerably more qualified way than has so far been the case.'

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