

ENTERPRISE EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

Fabrizio d’Aniello, Ph.D.
University of Macerata, Italy
fabrizio.daniello@unimc.it

Abstract: *Entrepreneurship education has become an educational priority in Europe and beyond, and there exist various practical interpretations. Examining it from the perspective of the capability approach, the purpose of this paper is to analyse the concept and its implications in educational (and not primarily economic) terms as these relate to people’s faculty to act and to the goal of human development, but also separate from the theoretical circuit of human capital and from a figure of self-entrepreneur. Consequently, this paper will focus on the importance of teacher-training aimed at supporting the rationale for enterprise education, relying on methodological proposals inspired by recent advancements in cultural historical activity theory.*

Keywords: *entrepreneurship education; enterprise education; capability approach; teacher training; cultural historical activity theory;*

1. Introduction: The Priority of Entrepreneurship in Economic and Educational Goals

The topic of entrepreneurship education has become a priority in Europe and beyond. From the *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning*, which listed sense of initiative and entrepreneurship as one of the eight key skills; to the European Commission’s 2012 bulletin *Rethinking Education: Investing in Skills for Better Socio-Economic Outcomes*, which emphasised the definition and promotion of entrepreneurial ability; all the way to the 2016 bulletin *A New Skills Agenda for Europe*, which revisits the central role of entrepreneurial skills, the focus on entrepreneurship education in European policies has gradually and consistently grown.

The 2016 publication of the study entitled *EntreComp, Entrepreneurship Competence Framework* (Bacigalupo, Kampylis, Punie & Van den Brande, 2016) attests to this as well. Aimed at revisiting the 2006 *Recommendation*, the objective of this study was to provide a common definition of entrepreneurship and to establish the fundamental elements of entrepreneurship as a skill. Beginning with three interconnected areas of expertise – Into Action, Resources, and Ideas & Opportunities, each of which, in turn, made up of 5 specific skills – the framework goes on to develop these 15 total skills according to an 8-level progressive model and provides a list of 442 learning outcomes. In essence, *EntreComp* is a solid basis for learning-programs dedicated to entrepreneurship as a skill.

Italy was one of the first countries to adhere to *EntreComp* and, in keeping with this framework, as of several months ago, and with the involvement of approximately 40 stakeholders, produced a Syllabus (MIUR, 2018). The Syllabus is subdivided into 5 content macro-areas – Forms and Opportunities for Doing Business; The Idea Generation: Context and Social Needs; From Idea to Enterprise: Resources and Skills; Enterprise in Action: Contending With the Market; and Economic Citizenship – and includes information on preparatory topics for the structural introduction of entrepreneurship education in upper level secondary schools.

As in the 2006 description of key skills, *EntreComp* also uses entrepreneurship to refer to dimensions of non-economic development alongside economic ones, mentioning multiple times, for instance, personal development and the goal of creating not merely financial value, but social and cultural value as well. Despite weighing more heavily on the economic side of the scale and on the employment market, the Italian Syllabus also pays attention to the relevance of entrepreneurship for personal growth and for life.

Nevertheless, the design and practical translation of entrepreneurship education in Europe and in Italy is considerably affected by the preponderance of economic rationale, to which the use of the word entrepreneurship itself nevertheless contributes. (I will get back to this in a moment). National and international analysis on the topic shows educational intentions that are predominantly business-related (create business, do business, manage a business) (Costa & Strano, 2016). The same report by Eurydice (European Commission, EACEA & Eurydice, 2016) states that employability, as an objective of entrepreneurship education, vastly surpasses that of active citizenship or of creative enterprise. Even the same titles attributed to the macro-areas of the Syllabus describe for us the crucial nature of enterprise in the strictest sense.

All of this is to say that, if it is undeniable that the economic-productive sphere naturally and intrinsically weighs on the educational objectives inherent to entrepreneurship, it is just as undeniable that definitions can help to balance this scale, keeping in mind that educational milestones are in no way limited to this sphere and aim, rather, to transcend it. In fact, in 2006, it was stated that: «Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities. [...]. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance». And in 2016, with *EntreComp*: «Entrepreneurship is understood as a transversal key skill, applicable [...] across all spheres of life. [...]. It enables citizens to nurture their personal development and to actively contribute to social development [...]. Entrepreneurship skill [...] is] the ability to transform ideas and opportunities into action by mobilising resources [personal, material, non-material] ».

It seems clear then that there is much more at play than the feasibility of a mono-dimensional growth process. Rather, it is more the entirety of human development that is emphasised, through the fruitful interweaving of awareness and free management of resources and objectives, of identifiable potential and action, thus illustrating the extent of an educational design from which fertile economic-productive repercussions derive as well. It is upon this “as well” and, therefore, upon the non-exclusivity of the utilitarian rationale, that this discussion may continue, reflecting first of all on the need to specify the field of educational investigation and, consequently, the pedagogical idea of entrepreneurship that one intends to put forth.

2. Entrepreneurship Education as Business Creation and Enterprise Education

Returning to what was mentioned earlier, it is necessary to highlight that the generic use of the term entrepreneurship as an umbrella term (Mwasalwiba, 2010), both in scientific literature and in the vocabulary of European policy, accompanied by a unique and widespread technical use anchored to a finalistic horizon that is purely economic in nature (the aforementioned “business creation”), does not help to clarify the educational specificity of the activities possible and encourages a reductive understanding of the term itself. Jones and Iredale (2010; 2014) try to resolve this problem by establishing a clear distinction between

entrepreneurship education as business creation and entrepreneurship education as enterprise education, based on a comparative analysis conducted between different educational experiences that took place in the United Kingdom.

The first is catalogued and described as a type of education inclined to a theoretical approach and to the use of traditional didactic methods (regarding business courses in the faculty of economics and management, for example). Its immediate goal is the creation, organisation, and growth of a business, including the launch of a start-up, and its focus is on results rather than on the educational and learning process.

On the contrary, entrepreneurship education as enterprise education allows students to strengthen the virtuous interaction between the removal of conceptual obstacles and the discovery of opportunity and between the expansion of the means available and the strengthening of freedom of action, according to an approach that emphasises continuous cultural and cognitive-reflective enrichment and lifelong learning. This approach focuses on individuals' capabilities and on their potential for adaptation and reaction to different circumstances, as well for appropriate situational behaviour (not only in relation to workplace contexts), stimulating the development of malleable and transversal abilities, of *formae mentis*, and of a sense of self-efficacy that are useful in facing the challenges posed by both the present and future. Enterprise education encourages taking the floor and asking questions, active and dialogical participation, critical comparison, problem finding and solving, and learning by doing and through individual and collective thinking, beginning with action and experience, and the democratic management of learning (Draycott, Rae & Vause, 2011). It largely concerns primary and secondary education and vocational schools, it employs active and innovative didactic methods, and it considers the teacher to be a learning facilitator. Therefore, Jones and Iredale (2010) identify enterprise education with a true pedagogy, capable of creating an edifying bond between school and society, as well as between school and work, and of preparing young men and women to take on the sudden changes of a globalised world.

As Morselli observes, dissemination of the distinction introduced – currently present only in the United Kingdom while the documents of the European Commission, the OECD, and the World Bank continue to use the generic expression entrepreneurship education – could put an end to misunderstandings at the level of national policy and facilitate a loosening of interpretative restrictions, primarily economic in nature. Therefore, it could encourage a weakening of educational prejudices fuelled by the nexus between entrepreneurship and economic motivations and a greater awareness (also from a scholastic point of view) of the importance of enterprise education (Morselli & Costa, 2015).

Aside from the fact that there may be continuity between the two educational forms – from the transformation of ideas into action to using this ability to launch a business – it is clear that pedagogical attention must focus on sense of initiative and entrepreneurship as conveyed by enterprise education, which in Italian is non-literally translated with “*imprenditività*” education (Costa, 2016: 194; Costa & Strano, 2016; Morselli & Costa, 2015) or «*entrepreneurial potential*» education (Baschiera & Tessaro, 2015: 301).

Furthermore, as Morselli (2016) also maintains, the difference between entrepreneurship (in Italian “*imprenditorialità*”) and enterprise education suggests the paradigmatic difference between a neo-liberal and economically efficient model and a liberal and educationally effective model.

In this sense, at least from a certain philosophical, sociological, and pedagogical perspective that focuses on the post-Fordist metamorphosis of work in relation to distortions that are not always recognised and objectified, one cannot neglect the plausible combination of entrepreneurship and self-entrepreneurship (d’Aniello, 2016; Foucault, 2004; Gorz, 2003), seen as self-alienation and self-enslavement of personal and interpersonal qualities in service

to instrumental and performance logic: entrepreneurship education as a prodromal stop in a management of the soul which hinges on individual potential as an apriori machine (Dardot & Laval, 2009). This, according to a precise reading of the economically and productivistically functional role of education, as provided by the neo-liberal theory of human capital.

On the other hand, enterprise education seems already to have the seeds of the capability approach within (Sen, 1999), moving beyond this theory, because it assumes as its horizon of meaning the expansion of an educational vision which, from a mere economic objective, pushes itself towards the broader objective of human development.

3. Enterprise Education and the Capability Approach

In particular, enterprise education seems oriented towards the promotion of entrepreneurial skill as a primigenial skill, or rather a skill to act, which comes before other skills and which goes beyond these to legitimise their implementation.

As mentioned earlier, entrepreneurial skill is needed, in general, to transform ideas and opportunities into action. The function of enterprise education is to release actions, broadening the range of creative opportunities aimed at these actions and at the opportunity for action in general. Therefore, according to the capability approach, providing educational support to this kind of entrepreneurial skill means supporting the attainment of agency freedom.

Sen (1987; 1999) asserts that agency freedom is often negatively conditioned and limited by the primacy of economic reason; that an agent is, rather, he who is unconditionally free to affect his own choices, decisions, and, therefore, actions; and that agency freedom is the freedom to achieve predetermined objectives by way of the means available. Additionally, agency freedom in no way corresponds with the arbitrary nature of action which favours only personal advantage and wellness, but rather pursues unselfish results which are completely different from those ascribable to the action of neo-liberalistically evolved *homo oeconomicus*. Consequently, agency freedom represents the effective possibility (capability) of achieving functionings that, shifted onto the pedagogical plane, can be identified within the scope of self-realisation, accessible thanks to the prior recognition of others' freedom and, therefore, of the educational relevance of human interdependency. It is for this reason that Sen (1982; 1999), stepping away from the logic of maximising individual benefits so as to look at that of maximising agency freedom, implicates concepts of commitment and obligation towards others.

To summarise, agency freedom is the ability to choose, decide, and designate the action process according to what one considers valuable (Sen, 1985), in which this value does not depend on self-referential evaluation, but on evaluation that emerges from a meaningful interaction with others, through that which we could pedagogically define as the democratic construction of education relationships characterised by reciprocal responsibility. It is within this exchange that the values which shape and direct action are negotiated and it is by way of this exchange and its significance that the action, rather than being aimed at an economic target, becomes first and foremost an educational and co-educational one.

As a result, enterprise education, conceived according to a pedagogically interpreted capability approach, ensures that before the technical-professional and economic-productive repercussions, in terms of innovation and creativity, comes the skill to act as agency freedom which contributes to subjective and intersubjective growth, materialising into life skill.

In essence, enterprise education appears within an educational training ground in which we work to develop capabilities and to clear the field of obstacles that prevent us from living the life that we could live (Sen, 1999), working towards our own success while maintaining respect for others. A training ground with a lifelong outlook, where the benefits

of learning, and of learning to act and act together, go beyond occupational and financial worries and ultimately focus, above all, on the formation of skills with which to handle the shifting and unstable scenarios of today and tomorrow. A training ground of environmental orientation, which teaches us to seize the human and material opportunities that an environment or multiple environments can provide in order to control our own lives rather than be victims of them (Wilson & Martin, 2015). A training ground in which the journey from idea to opportunity for action, passing through the reality of experience, becomes the means for actualising, with the other heuristic and hermeneutic attitudes, reflexive habits, interpersonal and emotional skills, and democratic propensities for participation and a dialogue that is primarily useful in fulfilling an educational plan. One could conclude by affirming that enterprise education is a stimulus for capabilities that can generate other capabilities.

4. Enterprise Education, Pedagogical Self-Entrepreneurship, and the Need to Rethink Teacher Training

If entrepreneurship education, deprived of its genuinely educational core in order to succumb to exclusively economic priorities, authorises a return to self-entrepreneurship as a functional depletion of self, then enterprise education authorises a return to pedagogical self-entrepreneurship.

As I have already pointed out (d'Aniello, 2017), contrary to the sense of the self-entrepreneur as one who cultivates oneself exclusively for work (Gorz, 2003; Moulner Boutang, 2000), who fosters personal skills and talents for the benefit of the productive sphere alone, being a pedagogical self-entrepreneur demands, first of all, that one develops oneself for the mere sake of development, a manifestation of oneself in the educational fullness of human qualities. These qualities support the tendency to intellectually grapple with an action whose development is articulated according to and concurrently with its own progress, nurturing a healthy symbiosis between action and reflexive thought, a symbiosis intertwined with the opportunities provided by interesting contexts and aimed at strengthening the individuals involved in view of actualising their various potentials. In other words, the manifestation of the human qualities required by pedagogical self-entrepreneurship supports the skill to act as agency freedom, which essentially nourishes itself on cognitive plasticity and, in turn, the skill to act as agency freedom provides expansive sustenance to the human qualities that support its implementation.

Therefore, enterprise education as pedagogical self-entrepreneurship is the education of personal wholeness, beginning with the action-reflection relationship and its mobilising force with respect to the enucleation of the other human functions at play, and this education, once again, cannot be divorced from the essence of becoming a person with others.

An education of this kind requires a revision of the teaching experience, and therefore teachers that can take advantage of specialised training. And, along with specialised training, it requires the affirmation of a school-community rather than a school-company (Baldacci, 2014), in which the director is a leader who pays attention to individual capabilities and not to individual performance; in which the existence of a learning context class within a learning context school that communicates with the surrounding learning environment can become a reality (Carneiro, 2011); in which there is a seamless continuity with the outside world, encouraging discussion of concrete issues and of the practical translation of knowledge (Nussbaum, 2010) and restricting its resemblance to a company with respect to an «open and limitless system» (Alessandrini, 2001: 180); in which combined capabilities are reinforced by fruitful environmental interaction (Alessandrini, 2014; Nussbaum, 2011). In short, a school that knows how to legitimise the aforementioned specialised training, but that is also assisted

by it to transform, opening itself up to be better able to handle the social and work-related challenges of a post-Fordist society.

In this regard, one cannot help but think of the recent developments in cultural historical activity theory (from here on referred to as CHAT). Instead, ignoring primary education and not entirely neglecting the work experiences in which high schools are regardless involved as well, in terms of educational offer (and therefore teachers) on which to focus attention, it seems that vocational education is to be preferred in this context, above all because it is more inclined to take advantage of solicitations from work-based, work-related, and work-integrated learning paradigms, or rather paradigms that are compatible with enterprise education.

5. Third Generation *Cultural Historical Activity Theory* and Teacher Training Development

While even scientific literature confirms the existence of a strong bond and even a sort of complementarity between enterprise education and vocational education (Badawi, 2013; Draycott, Rae t& Vause, 2011; Morselli, 2016), the preference given to CHAT is explained on the basis of its ability to promote the skill to act, which is the life blood of both the capability approach and the entrepreneurial mindset, as well as on the basis of its ability to develop multi-affiliation, the relationship between different subjects and activity systems and the opportunities for boundary crossing which can turn a school and its students into a multiverse that is open to the outside.

The fundamental hypothesis is that, in order to teach enterprise education, it is necessary to learn, first hand, a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and behaviour in line with the proactive nucleus of enterprise education. The CHAT framework includes the proper methodological tools for learning this sense and the agency freedom associated, so that each teacher can attest to their value and facilitate in their learning, using themselves as a reference model.

As explained earlier, enterprise education as pedagogical self-entrepreneurship, combined with the skill to act/agency freedom, includes the profound connection between action and reflection and the “educated” emergence of multiple aspects of personality that support this connection and its irrepressible insertion in a co-constructive relational dynamic of meaning and significance. The transition from useable means or resources to the increase or discovery of new means or resources, all the way to their conversion into opportunities for growth and development, in a broad sense, comes about through the questioning of reality, experiential learning and comparisons, identification of problems and their attempted solutions, reflexive and renewed representation of experiences, and proactive and retroactive processes. All of these are inevitable outcomes fuelled by the inexhaustible motor of intersubjectivity in action, which demands active attention and the ability to work as a group. If learning these attitudes is reasonably important to being able to teach them, using them to adopt a cohesive didactic method (European Commission, 2014), then third generation CHAT (Engeström, 1987) – after Leont’ev (1977) – can contribute to achieving this result, because it primarily shifts the objective of learning away from the individual and the context, and towards the relationship between activity networks and systems to create a close knit association between experience, action and reflection.

Moving beyond the restraint of contextualisation (Greeno, 1997) advanced by the theory of situated learning (Lave, 1988) and the challenges of knowledge transfer identified by Lave and Wenger (1991), CHAT highlights the fact that the verticality of teacher expertise (Lambert, 2013) must leave room for a horizontality animated by dialogue-based problem-solving (Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen, 1995). This horizontality plays a significant

role in learning, further deepened by the concept of boundary crossing between activity systems (Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen, 1995) and specifically between school and work (Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2013); a concept that was reflected, in a sense, by Wenger himself (1998), who referred to the learning value of the relationship between communities of practice (school and work) enhanced by the figure of the broker.

The stress placed on horizontality is needed to underscore the following: if enterprise education cannot remain closed behind the walls of a school, but naturally requires non-superficial interaction between school and work, then teacher training on the subject cannot remain confined to a single area of analysis and application either. Consequently, this training requires a deliberate alliance and cooperation between schools and the employment world, capable of sharing processes and objects and of generating expansive learning, whether or not it achieves a true boundary crossing.

According to the expansive learning theory (Engeström, 2004; Engeström & Sannino, 2010), always viewed from within the framework of CHAT, the spiral increase of learning has seven stages: questioning (calling into question existing practices and the emergence of their contradictions and of their conflicting elements); analysis of the situation (to begin an investigation that brings to light the principles or the explanatory causes of the problem or problems, explaining the origin and evolution of the situation and its systemic relationships); modelling (construction of an explanatory model of these relationships that is publicly observable and communicable); examination (the model is examined and verified with all of its merits and flaws); implementation (conceptual application, enrichment, and broadening of the model); reflection (reflection and evaluation of the entire process); and consolidation (the results obtained become new, consolidated forms of practice and action).

Without getting into the details of the expansive learning theory and of the subsequent methodological approach, the Change Laboratory – also a product of CHAT – was designed to develop cycles of expansive learning. The idea is to make use of tools, materials, and specially created stimuli to spark an abstract-concrete dialectic with the objective of collectively addressing the vulnerabilities of the practice/action, reflecting on these, and arriving at new models of practice/action (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). It is the systems of activity, and not the single activity alone, that fall back on themselves in order to find new ways forward. And it is this very comparison and dialogue between different and conflicting points of view that ignites a creative, purposeful, and innovative spark. The role of the researcher is to facilitate this common discussion, avoiding focus on the individual.

As stated, exploring the theoretical-methodological details is not of interest to this paper. What is of interest is that reflecting on the action leads to a reconfiguration of the action itself, turning problems into opportunities for transformative learning that expand agency freedom through the extension of its informative and evaluative foundation. What is of interest is that the mediation and negotiation of prospects, beginning with experiential specifics, can call into question the activation and exercise of different potentials and capabilities (cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, ethical) which, while they help to guide one towards the object of an action, also help the subjects of the action to grow from a human, and not just professional, standpoint. What is of interest is that teachers can learn to take advantage of a “teaching community” in order to translate ideas into empowered actions and corresponding new capabilities, educating themselves on the topic of initiative with the responsibility, or rather with the ability to answer to others regarding their ideas and actions.

6. Alternatives to the Change Laboratory for Learning and Teaching a Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship

Considering the procedural rigidity required for the creation of a Change Laboratory,

and considering the temporal challenges in completing an entire expansive learning cycle, some alternatives to this laboratory can be used for teacher training. For example, Morselli (2016) – in Finland for some time and in contact with the Engeström group – proposed a light version of the laboratory for an Italian technical institute, limited to the first two steps in the cycle (questioning and analysing) and comprised of ten weekly meetings of two hours each, dedicated specifically to training fifteen teachers to teach enterprise education. On that occasion, Morselli did not focus on true boundary crossing, but preferred introducing some boundary meetings in the manner of Wenger (1998) in order to diversify perspectives on the topic. So, in addition to the teachers and to the presence of the director (necessary for the subsequent implementation of the new educational methods of action found), several representatives from entrepreneurial associations, teachers from other schools, and one entrepreneur were also involved. Given that the initiation of expansive learning depends on an event that triggers the exploration of the old in order to establish a new course of action, the topic pre-chosen as the fulcrum of the laboratory discussion and trait of the union between school and work for the teaching of enterprise education was identified in the advent of the 2015 law reforming the Italian scholastic system, which made work experiences a structural aspect within all high schools and within the VET system. As of today, the event which triggered the dissemination of such laboratories may have been the publication of the Syllabus mentioned at the start of the article.

Meanwhile, another alternative to the Change Laboratory could be a boundary crossing laboratory, once again taking advantage of work experiences or the Syllabus. The inevitable weaving together of different environments required by work experiences or by the application of the Syllabus and the inevitable venture into other organisational fields, is what makes boundary crossing possible. As maintained by Griffiths and Guile (2003), the crossing of socio-cultural boundaries is a dynamic and two-way process. On the one hand, it ensures the acquisition of knowledge about other contexts, absorbing that which other people know or know how to do; on the other hand, it implicates the transformation of knowledge one already has and contributes to the creation of new knowledge within the contexts in question. Thus, a boundary zone can be established between school and work (Konkola, Tuomi-Gröhn, Lambert & Ludvigsen, 2007), similar to a no man's land, free from routine or from strict models, in which activity systems proffer their own beliefs, norms, rules, attitudes, and structures and ultimately teach new skills, generating something completely new. Therefore, the boundary crossing laboratory for the enterprise education of teachers adds value to the first alternative mentioned because it allows for greater multivocality and a socio-cultural discontinuity of action (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011) capable of enriching debate and reflection on enterprise education and its teaching. Basically, as mentioned earlier, the greater the conflict between points of view, the greater will be the result of the learning transaction. Furthermore, multivocality is described by Lambert (2013) as an essential factor in the training of teachers within that boundary crossing space which he calls the learning studio.

7. Conclusions: Enterprise Education and Teacher Training for the Expansion of Capabilities

What was just presented by way of example highlights, however, the need to educate critical thinkers, starting with the training of other equally critical thinkers.

Ultimately, enterprise education connected with the skill to act sees the youth of today and the adults of tomorrow as individuals who possess the means to master existence and not become engulfed by it, who are aware of their own limits and potential and of the limits and potential of the environment, and who are equipped with the appropriate tools with which to surpass these limits and increase potential, so as to truly be able to live a desirable life, in

pursuit of the recognition of personal freedom and of the interdependency between freedoms.

The subject of entrepreneurship education is balanced between opportunities for human development and references to performance, work, and economic functionalisation. In order for it to be considered enterprise education, it must be taught by people who have developed a critical vision of reality. A vision that can be defined by actively participating in a constructive dialogue whose objective is not only that of a change in method and action itself, but above all a change in terms of capability education, one's own and those of the students.

The collectively and the eco-systemic dimension at the centre of CHAT in general, as well as the crucial nature of interactive third spaces made available by boundary crossing and by its training laboratory, encourage this dialogue while also making it possible to hold various actors responsible regarding the bounty of educational opportunities to be implemented, creating an outlet for a sort of community involvement in which it is possible to truly verify the continuity between class, school, work, and surrounding contexts.

At the same time, while school initiates, both inside and outside of itself, a conversational and reflexive practice of a horizontal and vertical nature (with the involvement of directors) suitable for governing the complexity of a post-Fordist society, socio-cultural exchange between systems can make it possible to let go of partial and sectorial interests in order to satisfy those in which economic and purely educational needs can finally be met. In other words, it can allow for a cultural, neohumanistic regeneration capable of celebrating people's primacy and their authentic educability.

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