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Entrepreneurial mentality
- towards a discourse of its own

Discourse is everything!

Why?

Because it defines our basic way of thinking and in particular to what extent we can break away from old mental models.

I have been reflecting on the nature of the workshop dilemmas from the point of view of *discourse*.
I wish to share this with you.

The "problem" is that the "statements" (constituting the platform of our dialogues) were created from mind-sets still seriously dependent of entrepreneurship as creation of a small business.
We should acknowledge and reflect on those limitations of the statements.
Ironically, the more the statements are based on practical experience, the more they mirror our traditional understanding of what entrepreneurial means.

The Commission among others launched the new entrepreneurial discourse recently, and now we struggle in the quicksand of new ideas in old bottles: new ideas in the midst of an old discourse.

As is true for all major innovation, we are challenged with creating a "discourse of its own" for what we envisage as "entrepreneurial mentality" among citizens.

It's always like that: when we invented the radio we used it as a newspaper; when we invented television we used it as a radio – and when we invented the internet we used it as transportation of texts.

Emerging wine in old bottles and this cannot be avoided. However it should be reflected clearly in our mission: a "framework on its own" for entrepreneurial mentality as a 21st century competence or capacity, breaking away from the discourse of business creation.

Business creation can be one of many different OUTCOMES of entrepreneurial mentality and initiative-taking, as can for example the establishment of a non-profit association or a sport club for elderly.

All the workshop dialogues ended up in the dilemmas of identifying this "discourse of its own":

Business creation vs. entrepreneurial mentality

Entrepreneurial mentality vs. 21st century learning and work competences

A Competence Framework is precisely the opportunity to create the first "discourse of its own", or at least to take important steps in this direction.

ICT supported learning has been struggling for decades to establish its own discourse and is still haunted by the "technological" dimension in ICT supported learning. How many times did we ask: *does learning technology offer a new pedagogy?*

Social research, for example, is recently trying to break away from the scientific methods of natural science and economics and is struggling to create a "discourse of its own" (after method, mixed method, methodological brokering, etc.)

So, our dilemmas, haunting us along the entire workshop, is not simple "wrong". The dilemma struggling is a natural way of working to establish entrepreneurial mentality as a "discourse of its own" with only symbolic reference to the old entrepreneurship discourse.

This is why I called "entrepreneurial mentality" a metaphor during the workshop: as we are taking the first steps towards a new discourse, we need to "borrow" the words, the meanings and mental models of the "old".

Once we have established a "discourse of its own" for entrepreneurial mentality, these words will no longer be "metaphorical".

What is, then, the practical use of such reflections?

A lot! Because they help us find the right directions in the midst of the dilemmas and uncertainties, and sometimes frustrations: the creation of the framework is a privileged moment to break through to establishing a "discourse of its own" for what we still are forced metaphorically to call "entrepreneurial mentality".

"Entrepreneurial mentality" is the name we give to *an emerging discourse,* including such less precise but important meanings as for example:

→ Curiosity and exploration
→ Becoming a subject not an object of change
→ Taking action when spotting an opportunity
→ Working with the community
→ Seeking mixed collaboration and partnerships
→ Mobilizing passive and potential resources and creating new
→ Turning challenges into opportunities
→ Creating new things and solutions in real-life
→ Negotiating knowledge when needed
→ Managing constant change
→ Learning on the flight
→ Rule-breaking and pioneering

As can be seen these "meanings", however vague they might be, still announce the emergence of a specific new discourse, different from the discourses of entrepreneurship as the creation of business and from general 21st century leaning and working competences.

This also helps explain why the mission of the framework cannot be to tell what entrepreneurial mentality *is*, because it *is* not, it is *emerging*.

Entrepreneurial mentality is what European *would like* its citizens to develop in changing 21st century Europe. It *is* not, it is *being created* and for clear purposes. Explaining the "substance" as a fait accompli of entrepreneurial mentality is mission impossible.

So, the idea launched in the workshop of the "15 years" is fully valid and realistic.
However, the establishment of a framework is a very important step and milestone on this journey of creating a "discourse of its own".

At the same time, and somewhat linked to the same challenges (however this time at a more epistemological level: what was science, what is science and what will science become) we were somewhat buried in the quicksand of traditional science mentality, or old academic virtues, if you like: seeking the "totality" of things, searching "precision" and "accuracy" in the discourse, dissecting words and meanings…

All this is changing. Big Data is changing this!

We are starting to be more interested in having a lot of data available, seeing trends and directions, useful to our missions, and breaking away from "totality" and "precision" (or rather: the illusions of totality and precision).
Social and similar scientists are becoming knowledge brokers, knowledge negotiators working side-by-side with co-researchers of all kinds. Not concerned about the academic micro-dissections but about the real macro-usability of the knowledge creation.

The Framework will be created at the heart of these break ups and should pay attention to them, not to obsolete itself at its very conception.

Usability, innovation and direction are more important than terminological "precision".

The juice of the framework is its emerging discourse