Qualities of Entrepreneurial Design Conversations

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In our daily practice of teaching and coaching students how to develop their business proposition for their high tech new ventures, we build on innovation and design sciences. In developing their business proposition, students engage in several activities simultaneously and also change their activities frequently. How can we, as educators, understand this process of always changing activities while being in the midst of coaching students? We investigate this process by analysing coaching conversations we have with students in our course Clean Tech Launchpad. Based on the theory of complex responsive processes of relating and the participatory innovation construct ‘quality of conversation’, this paper discusses how design as a social activity around the business proposition takes place in the interaction between coaches and students. Therefore, we introduce the term ‘Quality of Entrepreneurial Design Conversations’. This local creation of meaning helps to design the business proposition development process of students.

keywords: quality of conversation; IDER; new venture creation; design entrepreneurship education

Introduction
The fields of design and entrepreneurship are getting closer together and overlap between the two field is appearing. The overlap is described both in terms of the theory and practice (e.g. Brown, 2009; Mata García, 2014; Shah & Tripsas, 2007) and educational approach (e.g. Garbuio, Dong, Lin, Tschang, & Lovatto, 2017; Katz, 2003; Neck & Greene, 2011). More design education programs teach their students the possibility of choosing entrepreneurship as a career option (Kleinsmann, 2013). Simultaneously, more
entrepreneurship educations see the value of design in their educational programs (Neck & Greene, 2011). Especially Glen, Suciu, and Baughn (2014) call to find ways to implement design thinking in entrepreneurship education in a way that it adds to, instead of replaces, the more analytical tools and teaching styles that are traditionally found in business schools. Because e.g. Fiet (2001) argued that in entrepreneurship education, the main focus is on educating strategy, managing growth, idea generation, risk and rationality, financing, and creativity. This focus remained the same in recent years (Fayolle, 2013). Some of these activities in the focus of entrepreneurship education can be captured under the umbrella of ‘design’, others can most definitely not. Fayolle (2013) also describes that in entrepreneurship education in recent years the theories of effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2009) and bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) offer alternative views on how entrepreneurs think, make decisions, behave and act entrepreneurially in education. The work on effectuation and bricolage is also adding to the traditional tools of business schools. Therefore, we wonder how we can better understand what Glen et al. (2014) exactly mean when they talk about the added value of design in entrepreneurship education. This paper will specifically explore how the field of design and entrepreneurship come together in the development of the business proposition in new venture creation. We will focus on how the transformation of the business proposition takes place. As Dimov states, the business development process in new venture creation can be described as ‘a creative product in entrepreneurship, [including] the progress (idea + action) along a continuum ranging from an initial insight to a fully shaped idea about starting and operating a business’ (2007, p. 720).

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, we will explore how design activities relate to other (non-design) activities in the business proposition development process. Second, we will empirically explore how design and entrepreneurship coaches and educators can engage and interact with students working on all these different (design and non-design) activities. For this exploration, we build on the theory of complex responsive processes of relating (Stacey, 2001) and quality of conversation (Buur & Larsen, 2010) in Participatory Innovation (Buur & Matthews, 2008). From these notions, we introduce the Qualities of Entrepreneurial Design Conversations to provide a new understanding on how coaches and educators engage in conversations with students working on the business proposition development of their new ventures.

The new Venture Creation Process as IDER Process
van Oorschot, Smulders, and Hultink (2016) described, based on the IDER model (Smulders, 2014), how the development of the business proposition in the new venture creation process can be described in terms of IDER activities. These activities are Initiation (I), Design (D), Engineering (E) and Realization (R) activities. All four activities extend beyond their definition within their discipline. I-activities focus on all ideation and exploration activities around the business proposition, in terms of users, markets and technologies. D-activities are identified as a conceptualizing activity in which entrepreneurs define the business proposition in a co-evolutionary way of developing the problem and solution space simultaneously (Dorst & Cross, 2001). E-activities aim at ‘robustinizing’ the business proposition, by testing and redefining the conceptual ideas as developed during the D- activities. Finally, the R-activities function as a bridge to get the
‘robustinized’ business proposition on the market, by setting up production lines, sales channels, finalizing contracts and so on. An important characteristic of the IDER model is that all activities take place simultaneously, but the proportions can change over time: from only initiation activities at the start, to a mix of Initiation, Design, Engineering and Realization activities throughout the process, to (almost) full Realization activities at the end of the new venture creation process. Visually, the IDER activities can be visualized in the model in Figure 1.

![Figure 1 Visual representation of the IDER model for the development of the business proposition](image)

van Oorschot, Smulders, and Hultink (2017 forthcoming) identified three different IDER patterns that new ventures go through when developing their business proposition. First there is a ‘standard IDER pattern’. The standard pattern is suited for new ventures that already know to a certain extent how they are going to Engineer their business proposition. Little attention is spent on the engineering of the business proposition, and most of the time and resources can go to designing and realizing the business proposition. Figure 2 illustrates an empirical example of a software new venture, which had to carefully design and redesign their business proposition, but knew throughout the whole process how to code and program (engineering activity) the newly designed elements.
In comparison, van Oorschot et al. (2017 forthcoming) describe a ‘wiggle IDER pattern’. The wiggle pattern is suited for new ventures that do not know exactly yet how to execute their engineering activities, and go through a so-called wiggle process of design and engineering activities. Figure 3 illustrates the wiggle process of an offshore new venture developing a large industrial application. The engineering knowledge to develop this application was not readily available, and thus the development was an interplay between design and engineering activities over a longer period of time, while also still initiating and realizing. After four ‘wiggles’, the entrepreneurs finally knew how to engineer the business proposition and more realization activities could be undertaken.

Finally, van Oorschot et al. (2017 forthcoming) describe ‘the R-drop’. They concluded from their empirically data that some new ventures have the tendency to too quickly Design and Engineer their business proposition early on in the development process, and then
spend most of their time on Realizing the business proposition as fast as possible. But the entrepreneurs do then discover that they are not working on the ‘right’ business proposition. The example in Figure 4 illustrates the IDER process of a new venture developing a technology for the car racing industry. The new venture was able to quickly realize their business proposition, but then discovered that the technology they were using was not allowed in the car racing industry. They had to stop their realization activities and start to spend more time and resources on redesigning the business proposition.

![Figure 4 An empirical example of an R-drop in the process of business proposition development](image)

**Implications for educating student in their business proposition development process**

The research of van Oorschot et al. (2016, 2017) illustrates how the activity of designing is an integrated activity in the business proposition development process of new ventures. At any point in time, entrepreneurs are Initiating, Designing, Engineering and Realizing their business proposition. It depends on the kind of new venture and the context of the new venture what kind of pattern of IDER activities is best suited. As well, unexpected situation will always occur which will force the new ventures to change their design and non-design activities.

In coaching students in starting their new venture and developing their business proposition, educators need to find how ‘design’ enriches the educational process as Glen et al. (2014) suggest. It is often unclear how the process will unfold and how much time the students should spend on redefining the problem and solution (designing) of their business proposition, and how much they should initiate, engineer and realize their business proposition. This leads to the question what the exact role of a design and entrepreneurial coach and educator is in the business proposition development process of students.
Complex Responsive Processes of Relating

To better understand the role of the entrepreneurial educator and the value of their coaching in the IDER-processes of the students, we draw on the work of complex responsive processes of relating (Stacey, 2012; Stacey, Griffin, & Shaw, 2000) The work of van Oorschot et al. (2016, 2017) seems to be based on the rationalist teleology in which new ideas are born in the mind of individuals (the (student) entrepreneurs (e.g. Davidsson, 2015; Shane, 2003), who can just take up the idea and run it through the right IDER-activities to shape it with the help of coaches. Stacey (2012) argue for a transformative teleology in which novelty constantly emerges in human interaction. Stacey (2012) build on the work of Social Behaviourism (Mead, 1934). The main philosophy is that “if we want to understand actors, we must base that understanding on what people actually do” (Mead, 1934, p. 18) van Oorschot et al. (2016) also touched, as Mead (1934) would suggest, on the complexity of a multi activity interplay of IDER activities at any moment in the development process. However, Mead takes a rational social point of view by stating that “the individual mind can exist only in relation to other minds with shared meanings” (Mead, 1934, p. 5). It is in the social act of communication that meaning is created. Mead describes how we perceive the world as the “means of living” (Mead, 1934, p. 120). It is for example only in perceiving ‘eating’ that we perceive the concept of ‘food’. It is in social and action driven communication that we make sense of the world.

Stacey et al. (2000) took up Mead’s notion and applied it in organizational theory to describe how to understand an organization as human interaction. In this human interaction, gesturing cannot be seen independently from responding. Instead of a sender/receiver model to transfer ‘already existing thoughts’ (Shannon & Weaver, 2002), Stacey (2007) argues how we change our own intentions constantly and that novelty is created in the interplay with others’ intentions. For coaching students, this means coaches do not simply transfer our knowledge and ideas in the process of new venture creation. Instead they create ideas about understanding the process of business proposition development in interactions with the students in gesturing and responding to each other.

An organization (a new venture) that develops the business proposition, does not exist as a system with the mere goal to develop the business proposition, but rather as the sum of local interactions (Stacey et al., 2000). It is in the sum of local interactions that the business proposition emerges. This view on new ventures has implications for educators and coaches. As Griffin and Stacey (2005) state, ‘no one can step outside of their interaction with others,’ and thus the role of entrepreneurial educators and coaches becomes a rather paradoxical one. Coaches are ‘officially’ not part of the new ventures that are created by the students, but at the same time they do become part of the interactions during coaching sessions with students and thus coaches are part of the new venture at that very moment.

Building on the work of Stacey, it is only in hindsight that we can produce visualizations such as those in Figure 2, 3 and 4, to illustrate the activities of the new ventures over time. In the midst of our actions, both students and educators will be Initiating, Designing, Engineering and Realizing all the time, but following Stacey’s notion, these are not defined activities yet at the moment of interaction between students and coaches. Instead Stacey
(2012) would argue for the creation of meaning in local interaction that allows the organisation (the new venture) to move forward.

**Quality of Conversation**

Buur and Larsen (2010) applied the logic of complex responsive processes to the process of design and innovation projects. Buur and Larsen aimed to better understand what is going on in conversations between stakeholders in design and innovation projects. They coin the term *Quality of Conversation* and explain that:

> ‘Conversations may lead to innovation when:

1. *Crossing intentions are allowed to surface;*
2. *New themes emerge in the interactions between crossing intentions;*
3. *New, vigorous concepts emerge that resonate with participants’ own experiences;*
4. *There is a spontaneity that allows participants to imagine new roles;*
5. *There is an ongoing discussion and readjustment of goals; and*
6. *Facilitation is exercised within the circle of participation, rather than from ‘outside’.* (2010, p. 136)

Buur and Larsen (2010) explored quality of conversation in Participatory Innovation (Buur & Matthews, 2008) projects, in which stakeholders from several organizations (e.g. small, large, industry, government) and disciplines (e.g. design, engineering, sales, marketing, manufacturing, policy) come together to work on innovation projects.

In our own experience of educating students, we noticed that our conversation with students have similar qualities of conversation. In the work of Buur and Larsen (2010), stakeholders come together to work on future projects with stakeholders that are not yet defined and where there is not always a clear way forward. In our situation, we work with students on their new ventures that do not yet exists and there is also not always a clear path to success. In our daily experiences, we also see how for example crossing intentions are constantly playing a role, and how we as coach sometimes become part of ‘the circle of participants’. However, there are also differences between participatory innovation projects and new venture creation processes by student entrepreneurs. For example, participatory innovation projects take place in industry, while our students are starting their business in industry, while still being in the environment of the university. As well, there is a clear difference in budget, resources and relations between the two.

In the empirical part of this paper, we will explore if we can provide an understanding on the business proposition development process, which is based on the quality of conversation, but focused on the business proposition development process. This leads to the research question of this study:

*Being inspired by Quality of Conversation, what Qualities of Entrepreneurial Design Conversation can we identify in the process of educating and coaching students in developing their business proposition?*
Clean Tech Launchpad: coaching students

To develop our understanding of ‘Qualities of design Entrepreneurial Conversations’, we analyse coaching sessions of our master-degree level course Clean Tech Launchpad in which students develop a high tech new venture. A high tech new venture means that the business proposition is based on the exploitation of a technological innovation or innovative application of existing technology, and that the new venture is facing substantial uncertainty in terms of its development (Burgel & Murray, 2000). The requirement for students to participate in the course is that they work in a team with other (student) entrepreneurs, and that they already took first steps in the development of their business proposition development process. In terms of a IDER process we aim at student teams that are in the highlighted area as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5  Students in the course find themselves in the highlighted part of the IDER model

Figure 5 illustrates that the course is mostly Design and Engineering focused with the aim to ‘sharpen’ the business proposition and to get the students ready to engage in more Realization activities later on. At the same time, figure 5 illustrates that the students are working on all I, D, E and R activities at any moment in time.

Twenty teams of 2 to 5 students per team applied for the course, of which nine teams were selected to join the course, based on how ‘developed’ their business proposition already was. Table 1 provides an overview of these teams and a description of their venture.
### Table 1  Overview of the nine teams taking part in the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New venture</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace</td>
<td>New technology to build a space shuttle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR Money</td>
<td>Service to assist companies with their Corporate social responsibility budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Jobs</td>
<td>Job searching platform specifically for designers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>New way of delivering food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Aid</td>
<td>Service to help doctors to explain treatments to patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>New technology to separate plastic waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothbrush</td>
<td>New technology in tooth brushing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Reality</td>
<td>New technology in virtual reality gaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Bottle</td>
<td>New technology for clean drinking water in a bottle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The course itself consists of two elements. First, entrepreneurship experts gave lectures every four weeks on an important element of new venture creation processes. These experts have entrepreneurial experience themselves and developed and realized several business propositions on their own. All experts are now working for academic research institutes while doing consultancy work with new ventures.

The experts gave lectures on the topics of (1) Business propositions (2) Prototyping (3) Financial projections (4) Pitching and (5) Scaling up. The experts provided a three-hour interactive lecture on the topic, including practical examples and asked students to apply the theory to their own ventures.

The day after the lectures we had individual coaching sessions with each team. The expert would also join these coaching sessions. The coaching sessions would last about 45 minutes per team. Additionally, we invited another team to join each coaching session, and we asked them to act as ‘advisors’. In this way, we enriched the liveliness of the conversations by bringing in the voices and critical thinking capabilities of other students.

In the coaching sessions, students and coaches applied new insights from the lecture and reflected how these insights could help to develop their business proposition. At the end of every coaching session each team developed action points to work on during the next weeks. All coaching sessions were video-recorded. After the coaching session, students delivered a report reflecting on the coaching session, they wrote what they learned from the coaching sessions and how it would impact their business proposition development process. The coaches took notes during all coaching sessions and also wrote reflections after the sessions.

**Method**

Based on our experiences during the coaching sessions, our reflections, the reflections of the students and the video recordings, we aim to identify qualities of entrepreneurial design conversation. Following the work of Stacey (2012), we are searching for what Stacey would call ‘striking moments’. Moments in the coaching conversations in which we
as coaches notice that something interesting is happening, but we cannot truly grasp yet why they are interesting and how to explain them.

Anderson (2006) suggests to be both convert and opportunistic in analysing one’s own experiences. Convert in the sense to follow a pre-set research agenda, which is in this case to look for situations that show similarities with the qualities of conversation as described by Buur and Larsen (2010). Opportunistic in the sense that the researchers allow themselves to describe social situations which would not necessarily fall within the pre-set research agenda, but are still ‘striking’.

Once we have identified these striking moments, Flyvbjerg (2001) suggests to ‘let the data speak’. By looking into the video recordings of the coaching sessions and analyse the reflections of the students we provide a rich description of what happened in the local interaction. In the findings section of this paper we will present five qualities of entrepreneurial design conversation that were striking and could be clarified by analysing the video recordings of the coaching sessions.

**Findings**

**Content and Process**

A first striking moment happened in the first coaching session with the Design Job team.

*Coach 1: Creating resumes [for designers] might not be as scalable as you think it might be.*

The coaches and the students discuss if the business proposition of the Design Job team is scalable. The coach assumes it is not, but at the same time the students and the coaches come to the realization that the students have a lot of insights and access to relevant resources because they created this first business proposition. However, some more redefining is needed to find the right business proposition.

Later in the coaching session:

*Coach 2: This might be one of this rare instances where you are your own target group.*

*Design Job Student 1: That would be great! And we can also easily have contact with our friends.*

The students start their reflection report with the sentence:

*The main insight gained during the meeting was that we shouldn’t focus on the status quo of applying for a job.*

The discussion in the first coaching meeting led to a new product-market combination that the students would focus on throughout the rest of the course. The business proposition became quite different from the business proposition that the Design Job team used in the application for the course.

We as entrepreneurship coaches find ourselves on the edge of being educators and consultants. We educate our students but at the same time the ventures the students are working on are very real, and the students make direct impact into society with their new
venture. Schein (1999) describes that process consultancy should be about the process and has to be seen separated from the content. In the field of design and innovation, Buijs (2003) also argues to only focus on the process and leave the content to the participants themselves. We only allow students teams to join the course when they have a business proposition that is already partly tested. But still, we find ourselves giving advice to the students on the content of the business proposition instead of merely coaching them in regard to their IDER process. Instead of telling students to engage in more Initiating and Designing activities to redefine their business proposition, we as coaches Initiate and Design with them. This first quality of entrepreneurial design conversation is that coaching happens both on the IDER process and on the IDER content.

Readjusting Common Beliefs
Another interesting situation we find in a discussion about how the social and entrepreneurial landscape look like. The entrepreneurial experts have between 10 and 30 years of experience working as entrepreneurs. However, what worked for them in the past, may not work in this place and time. One instance is in a coaching session with the Water Bottle team with the CSR money students observing.

Coach 1: I am myself a little bit sceptical, but I am supposed to be, that families of four are going to rent these. But on the other hand, they only go on vacation once per year.

Water Bottle Student 1: But when it is cheap...?

CSR Money Student: I would buy it and use it, why not?

The coach indicates that he does not see value in renting out a water bottle solution, for hygienic reasons he would see this product as something that you own yourself. However, the water bottle team is getting support from the CSR Money student:

CSR Money student 2: But what if I would get the product right away from the travel agency?

Water Student 1: Oh yes, especially in remote areas that would make sense.

Coach 1: Sounds like a good idea... in theory.

Towards the end of the coaching session, the coach is concluding this part of the discussion:

Coach 1: Okay, I would just like to see you to prove me wrong.

The coach is still sceptical about the product and how to introduce the product to the market. But at the same time, he is not shutting down the discussion by saying that this is never going to work at all and that they should not go for it.

The coach is seen as a true expert by the students. An expert who made a lot of money with his ventures, and thus a negative advice from his side would strongly influence the students. The students from both teams created a future scenario together that they would see working out in reality. The role of the coach is two-sided here. At the one hand, he is a process expert. But at the other hand he is also a potential user who gives his user
feedback on the idea. Just because he does not like the idea as a user, does not mean this student team could not do it. The readjustment of common beliefs of the expert is something that we constantly see taking place, which allows to move the process forward. This point can be summarized as coaches and students take up both the role of expert and user and allow to be challenged by each other.

Student/Entrepreneur Goals

In the coaching session after the Prototyping lecture, it is not clear to the expert what the students of Virtual Reality are actually working on. Not even after he has read the description of the team, or after the students presented a first mock up prototype of their idea.

Coach: Can you show me a picture of what the hell you are doing, because I was kind of getting it but I wasn’t.

Virtual Reality Student 1: yeah, I know...

This is an example of what we have seen with more teams. Students have an abstract idea in their minds on how they are going to change the world, but the idea did not boil down yet to a business proposition. When the coach asks them to show a concrete picture or drawing of what they are doing they cannot do it. At the same time these students were already involved in conversations with potential customers and partners. In IDER term, these students were focusing on only the ‘Initiating element’ and the ‘Realization element’ of the business proposition.

For this team, it is the first time they are involved in a course where they work on their own business. The students took part in other innovation courses but the innovations they developed always stayed rather conceptual. In the Clean Tech Launchpad course, choices made in the class room setting become very real outside the class room, in their own venture. This influences what kind of goals the students set for themselves during the course.

To clarify this point, in a coaching session with the Food students, one of the coaches gets rather upset when the students show a plan on how they want to get customer feedback on their business proposition.

Coach 2: This is the same plan [on approaching customers] as you showed us two months ago.

Coach 1: Can you also tell us about the insights you got from the customers in the mean time?

The students could not show this, because they had been working on the plan for the last two months. In other courses in their master program they had recently learned to set up good guidelines for customer interviews. The students wanted to apply this knowledge as good as they could in this project.

What follows is a discussion between the coaches and students about the amount of time the students should spend on defining their concept on paper and how much time they can actually spend outside talking with potential customers. To develop the business proposition, only initiating and design activities are not enough, student need to start to
realize certain aspects of their business proposition already early on in the process. Realizing their business proposition in this stage of the business proposition development did however conflict with their students’ goals to develop their customer interview skills. Students and coaches do not always agree what would be the best goal to work towards. Especially since the students find themselves on the edge of taking a course and setting up a venture. To which extend should the business proposition be developed on paper but with high academic standards, and to which extend do student engage in real conversations with potential clients and partners that may or may not lead to development of the business? We as coaches cannot determine which of these two choices is best for the learning development of the students. Stacey (2007) talks in this respect about ‘enabling constraints’. The students set learning goals for themselves that constrain them in the business proposition development. On the other hand, setting the student goals is the only reason that enabled the students to take the Clean Tech Launchpad course in the first place and start to develop their business proposition. This is a paradox that cannot be easily resolved by coaches, but need to be dealt with in the midst of coaching the students.

Buur and Larsen (2010) talk about There is an ongoing discussion and readjustment of goals as one of the characteristics for quality of conversation. In our conversations with students there is also a readjustment of goals, but we can describe the phenomenon more precise. By building on the notion of ‘enabling constraints’ we can redefine the quality of entrepreneurial design conversations as: Student goals are enabling constraints for entrepreneurial goals.

Entrepreneurial Roles
A striking moment happened during the third coaching session with the Plastic students. The plastic students developed a new technology to recycle plastic. The students are explaining how they came up with a clever way of getting in contact with a potential partner. They approach the company as if they would be a customer to get information.

Plastic Student 1: I am acting like I am a customer, but [student 2] is not involved in those meetings, so he can then later contact [the potential partner] and negotiate a deal.

Coach: But I imagine this will be a chained industry structure, the sales representative will not be the same one as the ones who produce machines. They are most likely not even the same company.

Plastic Student 2: Not sure...

The conversation continues for some time on how the structure of the market looks like and who they should contact first. After the coaching session, the students write in their reflection report:

We learned to ask ourselves an important question. Who is the user? Who is the buyer? Although they might be the same, we need to identify the needs for both users and buyers and define the market size for both.

Three months later, the students presented their work at the final presentation of the course and talk about how they manage all these different relationships.
Plastic Student 3: [plastic student 2] is the tough negotiator of our team, so far he got through every secretary on the phone. [...] [plastic student 1] on the other hand, is our analytical thinker and defines the strategies to approach.

It was never directly stated by one of the coaches that roles have to be decided on. But through discussions on who the user and who the buyer is, the students started to realize that they cannot do all elements of the business proposition development with all of them together. They started to take up roles, relate to their own roles, and present their roles to others. Students find themselves in the struggle of taking up roles in their new venture. We as coaches cannot predict which role will fit which student best. But by relating the roles of the student to the development of the business proposition, we get into conversations in which students will start to define their role over time. Next to designing the business proposition, students and coaches are designing the roles that each of the actors enacts, related to business proposition development. Therefor we can say that students try out new roles while discussing their experiences with the coaches.

Financial Meaning
Finally, we noticed how the students struggled with the financial aspects of their business proposition. It is hard for them to develop a meaningful understanding on how the numbers come together and how their business will be viable over a longer period of time. Some instances during the coaching sessions might offer some openings for coaches and students.

This situation is an instance in the financial projections coaching sessions with the Food Students.

Coach: Back in Boston you would have to pay a delivery guy 15 dollars per hour to deliver this.

Food Student 1: I am quite sure it is less here.

Coach: you have to figure that out.

Food Student 2: But we can also ask customers to come and pick it up.

This conversation illustrates an instance where the students have little knowledge about the basic financial aspect of what they would have to pay their partner (the delivery guy). However, since the discussion does not go deep into the mechanics of the financials, it does allow the students to think about different kinds of business models. A similar conversation takes place during the coaching session with the Aerospace team.

Coach: But seriously guys, how much money do you need for this?

Aerospace student 1: Yeah true, that is millions.

Aerospace student 2: But for separate parts of the product it would be less.

Here a similar conversation followed as with the Food students, in which several other business propositions are developed to sell in earlier stages. The students are not ready yet to have a deep understanding of the financial projections, but conversations about
financial projections do however help to sharpen the business proposition. Instead of developing their very ambitious project of a space shuttle, this conversation lead to the realization that maybe they can first develop parts of the space shuttle and sell these parts. The students would also not have the money to develop separate parts, but at least they do have the knowledge.

These are two examples of snippets of conversations where a financial aspect (which is a Realization aspect according to van Oorschot et al. (2016)) lead to a change in the design of the business proposition. By thinking less in terms of Ideation, Design, Engineering and Realization activities and more in a way of how a local conversation can move the development forward, the students are in the end let towards better design of their business proposition. In our coaching, we can see this contrast most clearly when we coach students about the financial aspects of their business proposition. Therefore, we name the last quality of entrepreneurial design conversation: Financial discussions are used for business proposition development.

Conclusion
How did the students continue their work? Did their new ventures succeed? For now, it is too early to say that. The students are still working on their new ventures, some of the students do it fulltime now, others while still finishing their education. Our education and coaching has served to interact with them in the process of business proposition development and has served the academic world to explore how conversations obtain a quality that makes movement in the process possible.

Based on careful analyses of the videos of our course we can make the suggestion that Qualities of Entrepreneurial Design Conversation means that:

- Coaching happens both on the IDER process and on the IDER content
- Coaches and students take up both the role of expert and user and allow to be challenged by each other
- Students try out new roles while discussing their experiences with the coaches
- Student goals are enabling constraints for entrepreneurial goals
- Financial discussions are used for business proposition development

In line with Buur and Larsen (2010) we believe that the ‘Quality of Entrepreneurial Design Conversation’ becomes crucial if we aim to support business proposition development. It is at the start of the business proposition development process, and in hindsight, that describing the process in terms of IDER activities is useful and the different patterns that van Oorschot et al. (2017) describe become meaningful. However, while being in the midst of coaching students, we suggest to understand the phenomena of business proposition development by emphasizing the creation of meaning in conversations of educators and students. By doing so, we also start to better understand our involved role as design and entrepreneurial coaches and educators in our ongoing conversations with students in their business proposition development process.
References


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