

Karolina Babič, Pedja Ašanin Gole

Importance of critical literacy for teachers and students when using business model canvas tools

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to analyze canvas tools (business modeling canvases) through the critical literacy method. The main goal of the study is to enlighten the existence of the implicit assumptions and contexts of these models and to point out the importance of such conceptual and contextual analysis of canvas tools in educational processes. Critical literacy is a special attitude toward the text, and in this study, a business model canvas tool is taken as a text. The method of critical literacy education is used here as a method of analyzing the material of the research, and also as the method suggested to teachers and coaches to use it in their work when using canvas tools. So, the study itself is a sort of a demonstration of the didactical approach that is suggested to teachers. The study concludes, if teachers will teach the students the skill of critical reading of business modeling tools, they will empower students with the skill of re-creating the world, to be able to develop new business models that will lead to transforming societies in which they live.

Keywords:

Critical literacy, business model canvas, communication, critical pedagogy

Introduction

The Business Model Canvas or shortly “canvas” as a tool or template for planning new businesses or products or documenting existing ones is generally accepted as a tool used in business teaching and training for more than fifteen years now. It is regarded as a one-side-sheet with prearranged building blocks and with instructed working steps to use it. It is a tool that has successfully replaced or at least well supplemented the old-times business planning with linear chapter-based narrative type of business plans. And it is of much help to teachers, coaches, entrepreneurs and other organizational workers around the world. But it is mostly (with many versions of it) used uncritically and without deeper explanation and understanding of its social, economic, political and ideological background. So, in this paper, we welcome the widespread use of “canvas” as a business modelling tool, but we try to reconsider it in the light of ideological and historical contextualization.

Canvas is a blank sheet of paper that can be compared to *tabula rasa* as an empty white paper, and so it is regarded as a perfect tool for students to be creative and to work on creating new projects and reshaping the world according to their beliefs. But using business model canvas as such an open and unbiased objective tool is at least misleading if not even pedagogically irresponsible, since a canvas sheet actually speaks a thousand words, it has prearranged building blocks and it has instructions on how to use the tool. So, this white paper is not as objective and open for creative spirits as it looks. And this goes for all types and variations of canvas tools.

The purpose and the goal of the study

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to raise the questions of terminology and structure of canvas tools and to look at them through the critical literacy method. The main goal of the study is to enlighten the implicit assumptions and silent background of these tools and to present the problems of uncritical use of canvas business modeling in teaching, and further, to give suggestions and support for teachers who use these tools in teaching processes to use them with critical approach. We see a long-term impact of such critical use of the canvas tools in empowered and critically-creative students who will be aware that their use of words and concepts and their use of systemic design of project can be rooted in implicit ideologies and will have a direct impact and material consequences in the world. Through the critical pedagogy approach, students can realize that interpretation of the world is a flipped side of re-creation of the world, and that the use of given knowledge and information through interpretation and application of it places on a student the responsibility for the re-creation of the world.

We are inspired to look at canvas business modeling through such an approach, of course, by the father of critical pedagogy Paulo Freire. “A revolutionary leadership must accordingly practice co-intentional education. Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators.” (Freire, 2005, p. 69)

Before going deeper into our topics, let us make a quick overview of contemporary research of this topic. Since canvas modeling is really widespread, the practical use of it is widely researched and also

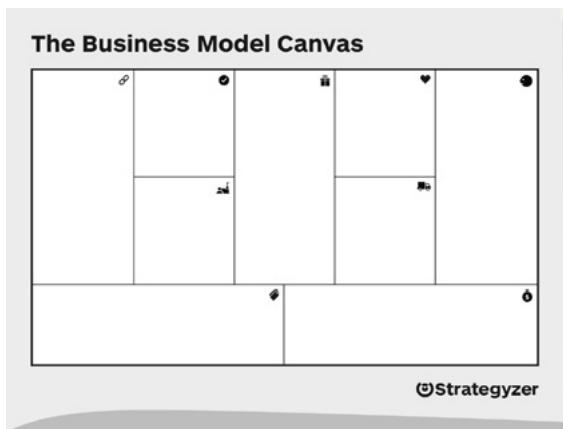
new types or variations of canvases are regularly developed. Also, comparison of different types of canvases is partly researched. One such comparative analysis of several canvases is a conference paper *Making Sense of Canvas Tools: Analysis and Comparison of Popular Canvases* (Tranquillo, Kline and Hixson, 2016). The authors of this study suggest a framework for teachers and coaches for selecting among existing canvases, and they also give guidelines for creating new canvases. The study is a good overview of types of canvases, but doesn't touch the topic of background or ideological context of types of canvases. But this study did give us some starting direction to narrow our research to "canvas business models" only and not to all possible canvases that are used for decomposing the systems and for planning, like the innovations canvases that also include precise product design themes that are not part of the original business model canvas and its variations. (*Ibid.*, p. 9) Or, like application of canvas approach to other fields outside business and engineering, for instance the applicative study *Canvas Model as a Tool for Research Projects: A Theoretical Approach* that takes the approach of a canvas modelling to scientific research methodologies field. (Socorro Márquez and Reyes-Ortiz, 2022)

But this type of research of canvas modelling is not covering the questions of our study, meaning the contextual and ideological background of the structure and concepts in canvas models.

Of course, we can't omit to mention Alexander Osterwalder who developed the classical or standard business model canvas in his 2004 PhD dissertation and elaborated it later in many of his works, like in *Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers* (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). This represents the outline for most of the so-called classic or standard canvas business modelling tools like those provided by Canvanizer (Canvanizer, n.d.) or by Strategyzer (Business Model Canvas Explained, n.d.).

Picture 1: A standard structure of business model canvas is a canvas tool under a creative commons licence by Strategyzer.

(*Business Model Canvas Explained*, n.d.)



But most of the research in the field of canvas modelling are applicative, meaning that there's been a lot of additional applicative research done with the purpose to widen or extend the classical or standard canvas by Osterwalder with new building blocks or new aspects or new layers to it. A good example of such application is a study *The Triple Layered Business Model Canvas* where the authors are developing a canvas tool for sustainability-oriented business model innovation: "It extends the original business model canvas by adding two layers: an environmental layer based on a lifecycle perspective and a social layer based on a stakeholder perspective. When taken together, the three layers of the business model make more explicit how an organization generates multiple types of value - economic, environmental and social." (Joyce and Paquin, 2016, p. 1) This is the direction that brought about many new types of canvas models, also the types of the three models that we will be analysing in our study.

Research approach

The methodology of the study will include analytical and critical decomposition of a canvas business modelling tool (of three different versions of canvas tools, including a standard start-up model, a social business model and a cooperative model) using the methods of critical literacy and critical thinking, with emphasis on conceptual and contextual analysis of the model. We will also present a small case study analysing the use of canvas modelling in a group of students in the study course *Social entrepreneurship and cooperativism*. In conclusion we will present some suggestions for teachers and coaches on how to apply critical literacy education in using canvas tools to their teaching work and how to transfer the skill of critical reading of canvas models to their students.

With critical literacy method here we mean, according to Luke (2019), the questioning about the real and material consequences of texts and discourses, and how can we reshape them, and according to Freire (2005), the capacity to analyse, critique and transform social, cultural and political texts and contexts. Critical literacy is a special attitude toward the text, including understanding the role of people (writers and readers, speakers and listeners) of the text in co-creating the meaning of the text, and therefore the reality. The Business Model Canvas is a text that needs to be used in teaching with critical literacy approach.

The world of teaching always faces the devil of relativism and the devil of dogmatism at the same time, and the teachers need to find a way to swim between the two devils. As Allen Luke says, “The risk always has been that bloggers and journalists, teachers and students alike are left unmoored to social or material reality, to work in a relativist universe of competing significations with no fixed epistemological grounds – with education reduced to a hall of intertextual mirrors.” (Luke, 2012, p. 210)

Therefore, in this study we will take a canvas tool as a text, we will read it as a text, a text that is constructed of a basic outline (building blocks) and of concepts (words with theoretical and practical meaning) used in description of the blocks and in instructions for using the tool. The tool that has its own architecture and interior design and furniture. With the use of methodology of critical literacy and with specific methods of critical thinking we are set out to read the canvas models like we would be reading the texts.

The method of critical literacy education will be used here as a method of analysing the material of this research, and also as a method suggested to teachers and coaches to be used in their work when using canvas modelling tools. So, the study itself is a sort of a demonstration of the approach we are suggesting to teachers and coaches.

Findings of the research

For the purpose of this study, we have chosen three different canvas models: start-up business model, social business model, and cooperative model. Fully intentionally we have chosen such three models that differ strongly and, in some way, radically. We did this to be able to show clear contextual and conceptual differences in them, but we are aware that, in practice, most canvas models can be somewhere in between these different models and some of their characteristic can overlap. Just for the purpose of display and clearer elaboration of results of our study we are using such radical black-white presentation of different business models.

Comparison of three types of canvas models: start-up business model, social business model, cooperative model

Table 1: Differential concepts used in models in comparison to “basic canvas”

Section of the model	Model no.1 This is “Basic canvas” to which we compare the no.2 and no. 3 models: Start-up business model (Business Model Canvas Explained, n.d.)	Model no.2 Social business model (Social Innovation Canvas Toolbox, n.d.)	Model no.3 Cooperative model (Združimo se CoopTool: Cooperative Canvas Business Modelling Tool, 2017)
Value section: middle of the model	Value proposition	Social innovation Value proposition Mission Social change Social impact Social and environmental problems	Social value (for today and for future generations) Value proposition Mission
Market section: right side of the model	Customer segments Customer relationships Channels	Customer relationships Channels Customer benefits (social goal behind the direct benefits of customers) Impacted environment, animals etc. Vulnerable groups	Users and (public) subscribers Users and/or subscribers being final payers or not Participation of users and subscribers in governance. Users also as members of cooperative. Relations with users/subscribers/customers. Delivery channels Impacted (invisible) users (maybe even future generations). Vulnerable groups
Implementation section: left side of the model	Key partners Key activities Key resources Team	Key allies Key resources Key activities (mission-critical activities) Team	Members (democratic governance), employees as members of cooperative. Community (also schools, NGOs, municipalities) Resources (also communal sources) Cooperative alliances Key activities (also membership management)
Finance section: bottom section of the model	Cost structure Revenue streams Business results (breaking point, profits, worth of company)	Cost of delivery Community reinvestment (what % of profits will be reinvested to community and in what ways?) Revenue streams (sales income, grants, donations) Measuring results (not only finance results but also social impact measuring)	Cost structure Profits: Who decides about division of profits? How profits are used? Indivisible reserves (commons) Revenue streams (sales income, grants, donations) Measuring results (not only finance results, but also social impact measuring)
Grammatical aspect of the model	The model is addressing the user: “you” as a “singular you” or a “plural you”	The model is addressing the user: sometimes plural, sometimes singular (social entrepreneur as one person)	The model is using first-person plural “we” (cooperative as a membership organisation) Equality in grammatical gender (he / she) is used

Interpretation of the differences in the three types of business model canvases explained on the basis of proposed instructions for business modelling for each separate type could be developed in many directions and with many details. We will expose a couple of them to demonstrate how to use conceptual analysis when reading canvas tool as a text.

Value section:

In the value section, we can recognize different understandings of the main purpose of an endeavour, whether it is a personal success, a wish to make profits or to reach a feeling of adrenalin, or it is following a social change perspective or answering the needs of people and societies or the wish to empower people. Also important, the word “value” here is used in different meanings in different contexts, we’ll explain this in conclusion. There is also implicit assumption present, that a product (a service or a good) that is developed to answer the needs of the customers, must also present the “money value” and no other scenario is possible. Even though we know in practice that many goods that people necessary need have no monetary value (like the light of the sun or a genuine social contact etc.)

Market section:

The most interesting conceptual specialities in the three models in the field of market section can be recognized in the implicit assumptions about the “needs” of customers being understood as objective facts present before the “products” that address those needs. The theory and practice of marketing teaches that needs are in many aspects produced by the offer of products, but none of the canvas models explicitly addresses this problem. Also, in the market section there is an uncritical use of word “customer” in most models, only a cooperative model tries partly to address this topic, that a customer is a notion composed of a user, a subscriber, a payer, and they can all be the same person or many of them. Some models use this difference, but in many cases with the prejudice that there is some humanitarian aspect in the case when the user is not the same as the payer.

Implementation section:

The least problematic is the implementation section, since more or less all initiatives that try to create a product and to run an organization are pretty much alike in the inner part, but there are some important concepts that are used and speak of ideological background of the models: in social business, they speak of allies and mission which are the concepts more often used in humanitarian context, but the start-up model speaks of partners which is a more formal business notion. On the other hand, cooperatives here speak of members, which is a notion known in communitarian or socialists or collaborative social contexts. Also interesting in the implementation section is that in the building block about key resources, we find in a cooperative model a notion of “communal sources”, this concept is not understandable for the standard start-up model since it is related to a concept of communal property or commons which is ideologically completely ignored in the contemporary educational and business world.

Finance section:

In the finance section too, we come to these different types of property, three types of property are known in most modern societies (public property, private property and communal property or commons) but since contemporary educational systems only present the first two, it is difficult for the users of the canvas tools to apply the notion of the third type of property (the concepts of commons or indivisible reserves) to the finance structure of the model. In the finance section we can also recognize implicit assumptions about the profits: in the start-up model, profits are not mentioned, even though the profits are often the main driver of start-ups, and we can see an implicit assumption that the owner gets all the profits, since this question is not even addressed. Also, in this section we can meet many implicit assumptions that manifest in different understanding of public procurements and subsidies etc.

Grammatic and text style:

A very important ideological background is recognizable from grammatical use of language in all models. The first two models are more connected to a liberal tradition of a self-fulfilling individual who is seeking personal fulfilment through a business endeavour, so they are mostly using the “singular you” addressing or a team “plural you” addressing, but the third model is more connected to socialist tradition and uses “we” as plural form of membership organization that is not understood as a team but as a community. Also, the use of grammatic gender can be a subject of analysing the canvas models.

Architecture of the models:

All three models have the same architecture of the nine building blocks. Models no. 2 and no.3 are splitting two of the blocks into two half-parts, but still keeping the same architecture: value in the middle, market part (outer part) on the right, implementation part (inner part) on the left, finance part on the bottom. There is one important difference in architecture, the cooperative model is planned to wrap in a cylinder when fulfilled, so the left and the right side meet up. We could, of course, image some new building blocks in all three models, like the additional layers mentioned in The Triple Layered Business Model Canvas above. And we could imagine additional blocks, of course, for instance a block that is set on the edge of the right side and it's called “uncontrolled impact on future generations.” And there could be another building block on far left called “Things we must never do no matter what”, there could be an additional block in the finance level called “the hidden cost of pollution and hidden costs of social exclusion” or “calculation of using the communal goods for production, like roads, knowledge, public administration etc. We are just brainstorming a bit to show possible directions for critical reading of the canvas modelling tools.

An example of a contextual analysis of the three models

Further on, we made a contextual analysis of the three models. We examined the three models through the questions of a contextual check-up, as proposed by Fischer (2011). We could, of course, use some other authority on critical thinking, but we chose Fisher for providing a very systematic analytical method to scrutinize the contexts of texts. For Fischer, “the context contains all sorts of assumptions, presumptions, background beliefs, facts relevant to interpret what is meant, rules of conduct and so on. /.../ In general, the context includes the people involved, with their purposes, beliefs, emotions and interests, and also includes physical, social and historical context.” (Fischer, 2011, p. 54)

Table 2: Contextual analysis of the three models

	Model no.1 Start-up business model	Model no.2 Social business model	Model no.3 Cooperative model
People (speaker, listener)	A business teacher or a business adviser or a coach. A student in a business school or a young entrepreneur or a start-up initiative.	A teacher of social or business studies, or adviser for companies or non-for-profit organizations. A student of social or business studies or a member of some association or foundation or a start-up initiative.	A teacher in social, business, art etc. studies, or adviser for local development projects or for non-for-profits etc. A student in all sort of studies, a member of some nongovernmental organization, a member of an initiative to become a cooperative etc.
Purpose, beliefs, emotions, interests	To be a successful and independent person. To live a good life. To work with the team of the best, to learn from the best. To have an interesting work and exciting life. Success driven.	Motives of humanitarianism. To be a social change-maker. To help people, to be a good person. Mission driven.	Motive of empowerment and social transformation. Believe in democracy and participation. To reach just society. To include all people, not only those who are the best to do the work. Beliefs driven.
Material and physical background	To work with private assets and create more private assets. To sell the company someday. To have better income than if employed in a corporation.	To redistribute benefits to the weak. To make a good business so (part of) the profits can go to the community.	To work with private and public assets and to (at least partly) transform them to communal assets (commons). To reduce the needs of people who uncritically consume material goods.
Social, theoretical, ideological and historical context	Trickle-down theory (unequal distribution is good for society since the benefits trickle down to the poorest). Permanent growth assumption. The speed of growth is a value.	Re-distribution theory (unequal distribution is a fact that needs to be corrected with re-distribution). Permanent growth assumption. Slow growth can be a model.	Social-justice theory (equal distribution of goods and equal access to goods is the only just social model). Growth is not a value. Can even be that de-growth is a value.

This is just an example how teachers can make a contextual analysis of a business model tool they are using and find a way to present this context to the students, not to show them such a table of possible contextual backgrounds but to set the right questions to raise the students' awareness about the context of the business model they are developing. With the purpose of students being able to understand concepts and their specific meaning(s) and to understand that through the use of the concepts in a specific meaning, they do not only interpret the world, but, if we use Freire, they re-create the world. It is not the teachers' job to assess a student for the direction they take with interpretation of a canvas tool and further with re-creation of reality, but to direct the students to develop critical apparatus to understand what they are reading, what they are saying and what kind of a world they are (re)creating. And to take responsibility for that.

A case study: a group of students in a course *Social entrepreneurship and cooperativism*

A group of 46 students taking a *Social entrepreneurship and cooperativism* course had to do a team assignment to simulate establishment of a cooperative. There were 10 teams. They were given two different canvas models as tools to help them create a full model of their cooperative: the classical start-up canvas and the cooperative canvas (no.1 model and no.3 model in our study). They were encouraged by a teacher, one of the authors of this article, to use the cooperative model as a basis, but also to use the start-up standard canvas to help themselves in understanding the building blocks. A teacher paid special attention to some questions regarding the students' understanding of the canvas modelling and how it resulted in simulated cooperatives they've developed.

For instance, none of the 10 teams understood or used correctly the concept of "communal sources", meaning, in the building block "key resources" they didn't mention the "communal sources" (8 teams) or they mentioned them (2 teams) but with wrong application of the concept. Even though they were using the cooperative model with precise instructions under this building block about what the communal sources are.

An important issue with the students in this case was also their problem with understanding consumers (or users) as also being members of a cooperative (meaning co-owning and co-governing the cooperative enterprise). None of the teams created the business model with users being also the members of a cooperative, until the teacher gave them suggestions in this direction in weekly consultations. After that, 2 teams included users as members.

We could, though, recognize a good understanding of possible hybrid financing of their cooperative products, for instance the possibilities of combining public financing of services with market revenue streams. The students started out with general understanding of public financing as "help" (help of municipality, help of ministries), but after reading the cooperative canvas instructions and listening to lectures about the hybrid finance strategies that combine public, private and third (social economy) sector approaches they gave up implicit assumptions about public finance as being connected to the notions of "help", "social subsidies", "laziness" or similar.

Interesting in the case of the group of students was their inability to decide about the notion of "free services" or "free goods". In one of the webinars in the course they were asked a poll-question: "Which of the following goods is/are free of charge for the user?" There were pre-given answers: a.) primary school, b.) public health services, c.) nice feeling of the sunshine on the skin, d.) enjoyment

of the street theatre show, e.) none of these is free of charge for the user. 25 present students had 20 second to answer the poll, and we (seeing the backend of the answers) could see that they changed their minds several times, not being able to decide between the answers from a to d. At the end, most of them (17) chose the c answer and many also the d answer (5). The poll wanted to be provocative, and in the discussion after the poll the assumption of a teacher was asserted that students are not familiar with these types of questions that expect from students deeper understanding of the background of such notions as “price”, “public subsidy”, “consuming a good vs. paying for the good”.

The purpose of this short poll and discussion with student was didactical, to point out to students their implicit assumptions they are having when meeting such topics like “public financing of something”, or “free-of-charge services” etc.

Also, interesting, most of the teams in a simulating establishment of a cooperative (8 teams) created a finance part of the canvas completely similar as a start-up initiative, meaning, having a fast growth of incomes, even though the instructions for cooperative canvas give explicit argumentation that the growth in cooperatives is expected to be much slower than in start-ups. Also, none of the teams elaborated correctly on the question of common property of cooperatives, it turned out that their understanding of property types is stuck to dichotomy of public-private and give no conceptual room for common property or commons, even though cooperative canvas explains the notion of commons. Here, again, our presumption was confirmed, that educational systems are teaching children and students only about two types of property so they lack conceptual capacity to recognize other options but the two, even if the tool they are using is alerting them about the third option.

Conclusion remarks and didactical recommendations for teachers and students

Since business modelling canvas tools are used in teaching mostly without critical exposition of its contextual background and that this is inclosing students in obsolete approaches to their future endeavours, we want to propose communicational and didactical clues to empower teachers in critical pedagogy, with the final purpose to empower students for critical use of canvas modelling tools in their businesses and social projects.

As said in the methodological entry, critical literacy is a special attitude toward the text, and we said that business model canvas is a text that needs to be used in education with a critical literacy approach. With this research we tried to read the three canvas models as texts that use specific concepts (that can mean different things in different contexts) and have a specific structure. We have also shown that there are many implicit assumptions when reading the canvas model as a text and that we can use some analytic approaches to enlighten those implicit assumptions. And we also tried to show one example of contextual analysis of the three canvas models to show how a specific model can be, as a text, fully enclosed in one economic theory or in one ideology or in one specific social and historical context.

We are well aware that our research has a structure of a bundle of partial analysis and that such a research approach has good sides and bad sides. The good side is, as we will see, an applicability of

the topic to the practice of teaching and coaching with the use of canvas modelling tools. But there are some limitations that follow the methodological approach of conceptual and contextual analysis as being mostly philosophical methods (without any quantitative aspect), and also using a small case study that cannot be generalized to any wider population, but, on the other hand, this leaves this topic open for further research through proper quantitative methods. At this point, we find our study sufficient enough for the application to didactical matters.

Therefore, we want to make some recommendation for teachers, coaches and students, on how to use critical literacy method for reading canvas models. Luke is asking a very practical question that is addressing teachers as well as others, the question “What are the real and material consequences of texts and discourses? And how can we reshape them?” (Luke, 2012, p. 216) Therefore, if we take a business canvas as a text and we take Luke’s questions as a starting point (Luke, 2012, p. 224), then the critical literacy approach to analysis of business modelling teaching proposes a set of questions for discussions in a class:

- How words (concepts) and grammar in canvas modelling attempt to establish relations of power between authors and readers, speaker and addressees?
- Where the business canvas modelling is used?
- What is social or theoretical or ideological context of the situation in which the canvas tool is used? Can we set it into some “order of discourse” as Foucault would state it? (Foucault, 1981)
- By whom is the tool used? In whose interests and with what goals?

In addition to asking those questions when using canvas tool, to actually read it as a text and read it critically, a teacher can support students with further questions as stated by Luke: “How does language, text, discourse and information make a difference? For whom? In what material, social and consequential ways? In whose interests? According to what patterns, rules and in what institutional and cultural sites?” (Luke, 2012, p. 214)

Another suggestion for teachers to use critical literacy approach to the business modelling canvas tools is a role-playing exercise. Role-playing and switching roles is a standard method in critical literacy education. Meaning, how would you read the text (the canvas instructions) if you were another person? In training workshops or in faculty courses a teacher can prepare a couple of different user scenarios and give students an assignment to develop a business model with the use of canvas tool, but under the condition of playing a selected role. Prepared roles must be radically different so the students will have to make some effort to empathise with the role character. Roles can be like: a student of art coming from a provincial town, a computer gig with a well-paid but boring job, an ambitious business student from a poor background, an activist from an environmental organization etc. Taking on a role in re-reading and re-writing their business model canvas can give them a critical overview of their past work and empower them in decision making in their future endeavours.

In addition, a very useful approach in teaching students to critically read texts and critically use tools is to present them with methods on how to recognize fallacies in argumentation, since many fallacies (logical formal fallacies or informal fallacies) are a kind of an uncritical use of concepts or misleading use of concepts. One such author that displays methods to recognize fallacies is Van Cleave, who presents and supports with examples all major fallacies in a full chapter of his textbook on logic. (Van Cleave, 2016, pp. 187-208) Let us look at one such fallacy that we can recognize in critically reading the canvas tool as a text. A fallacy of “equivocation”, when the same word is used in two or more different senses and this is being ignored in making conclusions. (Ibid., pp. 195-196) An example of such a fallacy in most of canvas models is, as already mentioned above, the word “value”.

When this word is used in a guiding question “What is the value of your product for your costumers?”, the word “value” doesn’t mean the same thing as in a question “How will you create value from your product?” In the first case the word “value” refers to satisfaction of needs of customers but in second case it refers to “money value”. So, combining these two meanings of the word “value” in a building block “value proposition” is, on the one hand, a good trick, since it teaches entrepreneurs that they can only make money from customer satisfaction, but if the two different meanings of the word are not recognized and explained, then users of a canvas model can make a false conclusion, for instance that customers measure the value of satisfaction with a money criterium or that value of satisfaction of many people can be summed up in a number like a pile of stones, and that you could design prices on such notions. Such conclusions based on logical fallacy of equivocation would lead to bad entrepreneurial decisions or to harmful social choices.

For Freire, “reading the word entails reading the world”, therefore, the transformation of the world lies in renaming phenomena. The responsibility of teachers, when using business model canvas, is to critically inspect on the proposed canvases and rename the building blocks and rewrite the instructions for the purposes of teaching business modelling in their own context and in accordance to the goals of their courses. Since, if we paraphrase Freire, writing the word entails writing the world. Therefore, it is not important only for teachers to understand the full background of the concepts used in canvas modelling, but most of all, to teach students how to critically read not just canvas instructions but all the texts and be themselves able to see the contextual side of their study materials and of the tools their teacher are using. This is where we come to support the thesis of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière in his controversial essays about intellectual emancipation Ignorant Schoolmaster - Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation from 1987, saying that the student who uses his intellectual abilities can be taught by an ignorant master/teacher or, in other words, the teacher can teach a student whose mind is emancipated also the things the teacher does not know: “The master is he who encloses an intelligence in the arbitrary circle from which it can only break out by becoming necessary to itself. To emancipate an ignorant person, one must be, and one need only be, emancipated oneself, that is to say, conscious of the true power of the human mind. The ignorant person will learn by himself what the master doesn’t know if the master believes he can and obliges him to realize his capacity.” (Rancière, 1991, p. 15)

Therefore, if teachers will teach the students the skill of critical reading of canvas models, they will empower them with the skill of re-creating the world, to be able to develop new business models that will lead to transforming societies in which they live and not to just blindly copy the existing business model that often show their insufficiency in many aspects.

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Authors

Karolina Babič



Karolina Babič is an independent researcher and consultant for social and solidarity economies, and a member of Association CAAP – Centre of alternative and autonomous production in Maribor (Slovenia). She holds a PhD in philosophy. She is an assistant professor for social economy at Doba Business School in Maribor. Otherwise, she is also a columnist and an activist when needed.

karolina.babic@gmail.com

Pedja Ašanin Gole



Pedja Ašanin Gole is a Senior Lecturer in strategic communication at the Ljubljana Business School (Slovenia), a researcher and partner at the Ennoema Institute for Linguistic, Philosophical and Social Science Research Ljubljana, and a visiting lecturer in strategic and crisis communication at the Institute for Communication Studies Skopje, Macedonia.

pagole@iks.edu.mk