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## ***To Live and to Learn: Practice-Led Learning Through Entrepreneurship Education<sup>2</sup>***

### **Extended summary**

The approaches to entrepreneurship education at tertiary level have changed over the past decade, specifically with regard to supporting the development of skills and competencies for the 21st century. Consequently, it is necessary to reflect on the relevant teaching approaches to entrepreneurship programmes for different contexts such as the developing context. Moreover, entrepreneurship modules are often offered as part of interdisciplinary programmes and in other cases it is offered as a discipline and in that regard the context also requires different approaches to teaching and learning. These different contexts might need careful consideration to teaching entrepreneurship because one approach might require teaching about entrepreneurship, another approach might require an approach for entrepreneurship or another approach where using entrepreneurship as a vehicle for teaching and learning might be required. The se-

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lection of approaches depends greatly on the relationship between practice and theory. In this paper, there is no dispute that both theory and practice are important in entrepreneurship education, but there is uncertainty as to which of the two dimensions (theory or practice) should lead the learning of the student in a particular context. The aim or goal of this paper is therefore to propose a matrix that could guide the approaches to entrepreneurship education at tertiary level with reference to binary constructs such as theory-led learning versus practice-led learning, and entrepreneurship in a formal programme versus entrepreneurship in a module only.

A qualitative research approach was followed in a South African Study that included students in the programmes with entrepreneurship as a module only as well as entrepreneurship as a programme. Semi-structured interviews were done with twenty-five participants who were formerly enrolled at a South African tertiary institution (at the time of the interviews, they were alumni). These participants were asked to reflect on their entrepreneurship programmes or modules by giving a retrospective view on: a) what an ideal programme or module in entrepreneurship should entail and b) what the most meaningful activities were when they think back of their programme or module. The twenty-five interviews were transcribed and analysed with content analysis. Themes of practice and theory emerged from the data set in terms of how these informed or led to the participants' learning. The themes seemed relevant to a matrix. In terms of the interpretation of the data, a novel construct borrowed from the design disciplines, "practice-led" learning, is introduced as a possible approach to entrepreneurship education for both interdisciplinary contexts as well as pure entrepreneurship disciplines as the need for such an approach emerges from participants' reflections and urgency to learn from practice as opposed to only theory. Consequently, the matrix was developed to provide a guide for entrepreneurship educators on which kind of approaches and activities to consider in two different contexts: a context with the entrepreneurship module only and a context with the entrepreneurship programme.

The matrix that is proposed has four quadrants that indicate different methods to teaching and learning for different contexts. The matrix also shows that postmodern approaches to teaching through entrepreneurship can be applied in interdisciplinary programmes with a module on entrepreneurship, as well as in formal entrepreneurship programmes. It seemed that participants were ready for practice-led learning and that teaching about entrepreneurship seems to have a place in a formal programme as it can guide the working principles of entrepreneurship as a discipline. In contrast, an applied module in interdisciplinary programmes can rather follow a teaching for or through entrepreneurship approach.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship education, design thinking, teaching approaches, entrepreneurial competencies, 4IR

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