Learning Entrepreneurship by Doing: A Case-Based and Performance-Assessment Design for Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education can become overly declarative when learners memorize traits, ownership forms, planning steps, and advertising types without making decisions under uncertainty. This conceptual article analyzes a multi-lesson entrepreneurship module and develops a case-based, performance-assessment design for teacher education. The design organizes learning around four recurring practices: noticing opportunities, mobilizing resources, testing value, and communicating a defensible venture decision. Existing module activities - concept webs, entrepreneur stories, debates, community interviews, SWOT analysis, business plans, product concepts, brochures, and advertisements - are mapped to a constructive-alignment framework with authentic evidence and analytic rubrics. The article proposes a progressive venture portfolio and separates entrepreneurial learning from business success, allowing ethically reasoned revision or abandonment of an idea to count as achievement. It also identifies assessment risks, including rewarding visual polish over evidence, trait stereotyping, and uncritical promotional claims. The paper offers a design for instruction and future evaluation without inventing learner outcomes.

Keywords: entrepreneurship education; experiential learning; case-based learning; authentic assessment; constructive alignment; teacher education

1. Introduction

Knowing definitions is not the same as thinking entrepreneurially. Learners may recite desirable characteristics, types of ownership, parts of a business plan, and advertising media yet struggle to identify a problem worth solving or revise an idea after contradictory evidence. Entrepreneurship education therefore needs tasks that place knowledge inside decisions.

The analyzed module uses a recognizable learning cycle: activity, analysis, abstraction, application, and rubric-based evaluation. Its lessons cover entrepreneurship and development, successful-entrepreneur characteristics, ownership, community opportunities, SWOT, planning, product concept, and advertising. These activities can form an experiential curriculum when their outputs accumulate and when feedback changes later decisions.

This article asks how the module can be reorganized as a coherent, case-based performance system for future educators. It is a curriculum-design synthesis, not a classroom-effectiveness study.

2. Analytic Method

Module outcomes, activities, applications, and rubrics were classified by the entrepreneurial practice they elicit and the evidence they produce. Tasks were then sequenced through an experiential cycle of concrete encounter, reflection, conceptualization, and active testing. Alignment was evaluated across intended outcome, learning activity, performance evidence, and scoring criteria.

3. Entrepreneurship as a Set of Practices

A practice-based approach does not reduce entrepreneurship to a fixed personality type. Learners develop ways of acting: observing customers, asking questions, generating options, estimating resources, negotiating with partners, testing assumptions, interpreting feedback, and communicating value. Integrity and responsibility are enacted through choices, not inferred from a self-description.

Core practice	Learning task	Performance evidence	Feedback focus
Notice opportunities	Community observation, concept web, owner interview	Problem statement and evidence notes	Specificity, stakeholder perspective, assumption awareness
Mobilize resources	Ownership case, resource map, cost and partner analysis	Ownership rationale and resource plan	Control, liability, capability, feasibility
Test value	Prototype, customer conversation, SWOT, small pilot	Test plan, observation, and revised proposition	Quality of evidence and revision logic
Communicate a decision	Debate, business brief, product concept, advertisement	Venture portfolio and oral defense	Claim-evidence fit, ethics, clarity, audience

Table 1. Practice-task-evidence alignment for entrepreneurship learning.

4. A Progressive Case Architecture

4.1 Encounter a consequential case

Cases should present a decision with incomplete information. The module's story of a sewing entrepreneur considering ownership alternatives is valuable because it involves skills, time, financing, partners, competition, and personal constraints. Learners should identify the decision maker, objective, constraints, stakeholders, and missing information before recommending an action.

4.2 Analyze multiple plausible options

Good cases avoid one obviously correct answer. A sole proprietorship may preserve control but concentrate risk; a partnership may add resources but create governance challenges; a corporation may support investment but increase complexity. Learners should specify decision criteria and compare options using evidence. Disagreement becomes instructional when arguments expose different priorities.

4.3 Apply concepts to a local venture

After analyzing a common case, learners apply the same decision structure to a community opportunity. They conduct observation or interviews, identify a target user, and construct an initial value proposition. The case provides rehearsal; the local task introduces genuine variation and uncertainty.

4.4 Revisit after feedback

Experiential learning requires iteration. Feedback on the first proposal should affect the ownership choice, product concept, cost assumptions, and communication plan. A final portfolio should display the original assumption, the evidence encountered, the change made, and the reason. Revision is stronger evidence of learning than a flawless-looking first submission.

5. The Venture Learning Portfolio

A coherent portfolio can accumulate across lessons: (1) community-needs map; (2) entrepreneurial case analysis; (3) personal and team capability inventory; (4) opportunity statement; (5) ownership and governance decision; (6) interview or observation evidence; (7) SWOT-to-action matrix; (8) business-model and resource assumptions; (9) product or service prototype; (10) ethical advertising artifact; and (11) reflection on whether to proceed, pivot, or stop.

The portfolio should preserve intermediate drafts. If only the final brochure or business plan is assessed, learners may hide uncertainty and receive credit for presentation quality unrelated to entrepreneurial reasoning.

6. Designing Authentic Performance Assessment

6.1 Authenticity as correspondence

An authentic assessment resembles the decisions, information, constraints, and standards of practice outside the classroom. It does not require learners to operate a real business or risk personal money. A simulated pitch can be authentic if the audience asks credible questions, evidence is required, resource limits are specified, and revision follows.

6.2 Analytic criteria

Rubrics should separate dimensions that are often combined: problem evidence, stakeholder understanding, feasibility, financial reasoning, use of concepts, ethical judgment, response to feedback, and communication. Creativity should not compensate for unsupported claims, and attractive graphics should not compensate for an unsafe or misleading offer.

Criterion	Developing evidence	Proficient evidence	Advanced evidence
Problem framing	Broad need with limited evidence	Specific user, context, and observed problem	Contrasting evidence and boundaries of the problem
Decision reasoning	Recommendation based mainly on preference	Criteria-based comparison of alternatives	Trade-offs, uncertainty, and trigger for revision
Feasibility	Lists resources without quantities or sources	Connects activities, resources, costs, and partners	Tests a critical assumption and updates the model
Responsibility	Mentions ethics generally	Identifies concrete stakeholder risks and safeguards	Revises the venture to reduce harm or improve inclusion
Communication	Promotional claims exceed evidence	Clear proposition supported by available evidence	Adapts message to audience and acknowledges uncertainty

Table 2. Illustrative analytic rubric for a venture portfolio.

7. Assessment Risks and Corrections

Trait stereotyping is one risk: learners may conclude that only highly extroverted, competitive, or charismatic people can be entrepreneurs. Cases should show varied roles, team configurations, and forms of enterprise. A second risk is survivorship bias, in which famous success stories obscure failed ventures, structural advantages, and luck. Comparative cases should include setbacks, closures, and responsible decisions not to proceed.

A third risk is conflating learning with revenue. Short courses cannot fairly judge entrepreneurial competence through actual profit alone because market conditions, capital, and timing differ. Assessment should focus on evidence gathering, reasoning, testing, adaptation, and responsibility. A fourth risk is promotional overreach. Advertising tasks should require claims that are truthful, substantiated, and appropriate for the audience.

8. Role of the Instructor

The instructor becomes a designer of uncertainty and feedback rather than a transmitter of formulas. Early in the course, the teacher models how to question a case and distinguish fact from assumption. Later, the teacher functions as a critical customer, lender, supplier, regulator, or community stakeholder. Feedback should ask what evidence would change the learner's decision and what risk remains least understood.

9. Evaluating the Curriculum

Future classroom research can examine changes in learners' opportunity statements, quality of evidence, calibration of claims, and ability to revise. Portfolio scoring should use trained raters and documented criteria. Learner interviews can reveal whether a polished plan reflects genuine reasoning. Any evaluation should distinguish entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial knowledge, and demonstrated practice because they are related but different outcomes.

10. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education becomes coherent when lessons accumulate into decisions and revisions. The module's cases, debates, interviews, SWOT tasks, business plans, product concepts, and advertisements can support this approach when aligned to practices and authentic evidence. A progressive venture portfolio makes learning visible from initial observation to final proceed-pivot-stop judgment. It also permits responsible rejection of a weak idea to count as success in learning, even when no business is launched.

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