

Cultivating Enterprising Educators: A Community-Value Competency Framework for Teacher Preparation

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is frequently reduced to business-plan writing or lists of desirable traits. This conceptual practice article offers a more coherent alternative for teacher-education programs: a competency-based learning sequence that moves students from self-awareness to opportunity recognition, disciplined experimentation, market engagement, and reflection on community value. The framework was developed through a directed qualitative analysis of a 68-page entrepreneurship module organized around nine lessons, including socio-economic development, entrepreneurial characteristics, personal entrepreneurial competencies, business ideas, strategy, selling, product concepts, and advertising. The analysis identified a recurring instructional pattern of activity, analysis, abstraction, and application. Interpreted through experiential learning and entrepreneurship-as-practice scholarship, this pattern can support authentic learning when tasks are cumulative, evidence producing, and connected to local problems. The article proposes a five-stage learning architecture, an aligned assessment strategy, and safeguards against trait essentialism and unsupported claims of economic impact. It concludes that future teachers should learn entrepreneurship not merely as preparation to own a venture, but as a method for creating, testing, communicating, and ethically evaluating value in schools and communities.

Keywords: *entrepreneurship education; teacher education; competency-based learning; experiential learning; opportunity recognition; community development*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has educational value beyond the formation of new firms. It can help learners notice unmet needs, mobilize limited resources, test possible solutions, communicate value, and learn from uncertain outcomes. These capabilities align with the broad domains of ideas and opportunities, resources, and action in the EntreComp framework (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). They are especially relevant to future teachers, who routinely design learning experiences, coordinate people, work within constraints, and respond to community needs. Yet entrepreneurship courses often fragment these capabilities into disconnected topics: a lesson on successful personalities, a self-rating instrument, a business idea, a sales exercise, and a final advertisement. Students may complete each requirement without understanding how one decision informs the next.

The instructional module examined for this article contains a potentially stronger logic. Its nine lessons progress from the social role of entrepreneurship and personal entrepreneurial characteristics toward idea generation, business strategy, selling, product development, and advertising (Almerez & Balio, n.d.). Most lessons use a four-part cycle: an opening activity, guided analysis, conceptual abstraction, and an applied output. This structure is compatible with experiential learning because learners first encounter or create an experience, examine it, connect it to concepts, and use the resulting insight in a new task (Kolb, 1984). The challenge is to make the cycle cumulative rather than episodic.

This article therefore asks: How can the module's content and activity structure be reorganized into a coherent competency-based learning model for future teachers? The contribution is conceptual and practical. It does not report learner outcomes. Instead, it synthesizes the supplied module with established work on entrepreneurial competence and experiential pedagogy to propose a design that can be tested in later classroom research.

2. Analytical Approach

A directed qualitative document analysis was conducted on the supplied 68-page module. The unit of analysis was the lesson, including its stated outcomes, learning activities, explanatory content, application task,

and scoring rubric. Initial codes were drawn from three broad domains commonly used in entrepreneurship education: ideas and opportunities, resources, and action. Additional codes were added when the module emphasized personal characteristics, selling, communication, socio-economic contribution, and reflective judgment.

The analysis proceeded in three passes. First, the nine lessons were mapped according to the main action expected from the learner. Second, activities were examined for the evidence they could generate, such as a self-assessment, interview, product concept, strategy, brochure, or advertisement. Third, the sequence was reviewed for alignment: whether earlier evidence became an input to later decisions. This final pass exposed the principal design opportunity. The module already contains most components of an entrepreneurial project, but the components need an explicit chain of evidence.

Because the source is an instructional document rather than a dataset, the present article makes no causal claim about effectiveness. The proposed model is a design hypothesis grounded in document analysis and relevant literature. Its value should ultimately be judged through implementation evidence, learner work, observation, and follow-up studies.

3. The Competency Progression

The first instructional move should be from entrepreneurship as a heroic identity to entrepreneurship as situated value creation. Stories of successful entrepreneurs can motivate learners, but stories become educationally useful only when students examine decisions, constraints, trade-offs, and consequences. A local need-mapping task can therefore precede or accompany the success story. Learners identify a problem in a school or community, name the people affected, and distinguish an observed need from an assumed need.

The second move is from trait labeling to reflective self-regulation. Lists of integrity, persistence, passion, leadership, competitiveness, organization, selling ability, and time management can imply that entrepreneurs possess a fixed personality. A competency approach treats these qualities as observable behaviors that can be practiced in context, consistent with entrepreneurship-as-method approaches (Neck & Greene, 2011). Instead of concluding that a learner “lacks persistence,” an assessor can ask whether the learner tried an alternative after receiving negative evidence, documented the reason for changing direction, or completed an agreed task. Behavioral evidence is fairer, more teachable, and more useful for feedback.

The third move is opportunity framing. The module’s work on business ideas and environmental scanning can be organized around a concise opportunity statement: for a defined user, an unresolved problem creates an opportunity to offer a particular benefit under identifiable constraints. Students should support this statement with modest evidence, such as short interviews, direct observation, price checks, or a comparison of existing alternatives. The objective is not to prove that the idea will succeed, but to replace unsupported confidence with testable assumptions.

The fourth move is disciplined action. Strategy, selling, product concept development, and advertising should operate as linked experiments. A product concept translates the opportunity into features and a value promise. A sales conversation tests whether that promise is understandable and relevant. A prototype or sample tests feasibility and user response. An advertisement tests whether the message attracts the intended audience without exaggeration. Each action produces evidence for revision and contributes to the learner’s developing entrepreneurial narrative (Rae, 2005).

The fifth move is reflection on value and responsibility. The module begins with socio-economic development; that theme should return at the end. Students can evaluate whether their proposed venture creates value for customers, imposes hidden costs, uses resources responsibly, includes or excludes particular groups, and offers plausible benefits to the community. This closes the learning cycle and prevents “profit” from becoming the only measure of entrepreneurial success.

4. Five-Stage Learning Architecture

Stage	Learner question	Evidence produced
1. Notice	What local problem or aspiration deserves attention?	Need map, observation notes, stakeholder description
2. Position	What behaviors and resources can I contribute or develop?	Behavior-based self-assessment and improvement goal
3. Frame	For whom is this an opportunity, and what assumptions am I making?	Opportunity statement, interview notes, alternatives scan
4. Experiment	What is the smallest ethical test of product, price, process, or message?	Prototype, sales script, feedback log, revised concept
5. Evaluate	What value was created, for whom, and with what trade-offs?	Evidence-based reflection and community-value statement

5. Assessment for Learning

Assessment should follow the same progression. A portfolio is more appropriate than a single final business plan because it preserves evidence of change and supports the shift from content delivery toward intentionally designed learning processes (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). At minimum, the portfolio should contain the original problem statement, stakeholder evidence, the learner’s assumptions, a first and revised product concept, feedback from a sales or message test, and a reflection explaining what changed and why. The final score should reward reasoned revision rather than the appearance of certainty.

Rubrics in the source module emphasize depth, completeness, organization, creativity, and communication. These dimensions remain useful, but they can be made more observable. “Depth,” for example, can be defined as the use of specific evidence to explain a decision. “Creativity” can be judged by the meaningful difference between the proposal and existing alternatives, not by decorative presentation. “Application” can be judged by whether the learner used feedback to revise an assumption, feature, price, or message.

A balanced rubric may assign comparable weight to opportunity evidence, responsible action, iteration, communication, and reflection. Commercial performance should not dominate grading because students enter with unequal access to money, networks, devices, transport, and customers. The course should assess learning under uncertainty, not reward prior advantage.

6. Implications for Teacher-Education Programs

Teacher-education programs can use the framework in at least three ways. First, entrepreneurship tasks can be anchored in educational and community settings: low-cost learning materials, food or livelihood initiatives, tutorial services, school-event solutions, local information campaigns, or tools for small organizations. This broad value-creation orientation is consistent with recommendations to connect entrepreneurship education to learners’ contexts and developmental stages (Lackeus, 2015). It makes the course relevant without forcing every learner to claim a lifelong intention to become a business owner.

Second, faculty can model entrepreneurial teaching. Short cycles of making, testing, feedback, and revision are more consistent with entrepreneurship than long lectures followed by a polished final pitch. Teachers should disclose that uncertainty is normal, distinguish facts from assumptions, and invite students to revise ideas without treating revision as failure.

Third, programs can connect competence to professional practice. Opportunity recognition resembles needs assessment; value proposition design resembles learner-centered planning; resource mobilization resembles project coordination; ethical selling resembles clear advocacy; and reflection resembles evidence-based teaching. These parallels allow future teachers to carry entrepreneurial competence into classrooms, extension activities, and community partnerships even when they do not launch firms.

7. Limitations and Research Agenda

The framework is derived from one instructional module and a selected body of literature. It has not yet been validated with students or faculty. The module's audience, implementation conditions, and institutional constraints may differ from those of other teacher-education programs. Moreover, competency frameworks can create a false appearance of precision if assessors treat every behavior as context free.

Future research should pilot the five-stage sequence and examine the quality of learner evidence across stages. Useful questions include whether opportunity statements become more specific after interviews, whether students revise product concepts in response to feedback, whether behavior-based self-assessment improves the quality of goal setting, and whether community-value reflection changes venture decisions. Mixed methods would be appropriate: rubric scores can describe patterns, while interviews and artifact analysis can explain how learners reasoned.

8. Conclusion

The supplied entrepreneurship module already contains the elements of an authentic learning journey: social purpose, self-knowledge, opportunity recognition, strategy, selling, product design, and communication. Its educational power increases when these elements are treated as one evidence-generating sequence. For future teachers, entrepreneurship should be learned as a disciplined practice of noticing needs, mobilizing resources, testing ideas, communicating responsibly, and evaluating value. This approach replaces trait mythology with teachable behavior and replaces disconnected outputs with a coherent portfolio of learning.

Declarations

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