Contemporary Approaches to Bridging Classroom and Experiential Education - A
Phenomenological Study

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This dissertation titled
Contemporary Approaches to Bridging Classroom and Experiential Education - A
Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

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Contemporary Approaches to Bridging Classroom and Experiential Education within Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Programs in the United States

Director of Dissertation: Peter C. Mather

Purpose – Participants in this study were asked to describe ways in which they develop and implement experiential teaching strategies to create a robust curriculum that incorporates both classroom and applied learning opportunities, and how and if reflective practices are incorporated into those.

Design/methodology/approach – In total, 13 educators from 11 different institutions of higher education in the US participated in the study.

Findings – Subjects interviewed described educational strategies within the entrepreneurship field that largely incorporate experiential learning opportunities but vary greatly in terms of breadth and depth of those programs. Further, participants in the study support prior research emphasizing the limited use and design of reflective practices in higher education curriculum.

Research limitations/implications – Due to the limited number of educators interviewed in this study, supplementary research utilizing a more robust sample set and a more comprehensive and longitudinal approach to explore the topic of experiential education within the entrepreneurship curriculum is recommended. Further, the data collected indicates a need for future study focused on reflective practices within the curriculum and beyond, and also supports exploration of ways in which experiential learning and reflective practices impact student learning.
Practical implications – The data collected illustrates the practical use of experiential learning opportunities and reflective practices amongst the participants. In conclusion, the findings indicate that more creative and purposeful approaches can be made in both these areas.

Originality/value – These findings contribute to existing literature exploring the use of experiential learning within entrepreneurship education and further enhances understanding of if and how reflective practices are currently being used within the field.

Keywords – experiential learning, reflective practices, entrepreneurship education

Paper type – Dissertation
Dedication

For my son, Derik Rafael Diaz.

Without whom my accomplishments are meaningless.
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This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people. First, I must acknowledge the unwavering support of my dissertation chair, Dr. Peter Mather. He is one of the first people I met when I arrived on campus and has dedicated much time and energy to ensure my success throughout this nearly seven-year journey. I thank you for your confidence in me.

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To my stalwart supporter, Stephen Golding, who has been a source of encouragement and motivation through not just this degree program, but an MBA as well. I finally forgive you for recruiting me to Ohio University.

*Tell me, and I forget.*

*Teach me, and I remember.*

*Involve me, and I learn.*

*-Benjamin Franklin*
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Chapter 1: Introduction

As technological advances evolve to build a platform for global connectivity, universities in the 21st century have a responsibility to develop innovative collaborations and networks where vital knowledge and information is shared. In the 2013 report, \textit{Status of Implementation of Strategic Recommendations for Advancing Ohio’s Innovation Economy}, (https://www.ohiohighered.org/board/condition-report), the Ohio Board of Regents outlined recommendations for how the State could position itself to compete and lead in the global innovation economy. Particular importance was stressed upon connections and partnerships between universities, government, and industries. Harnessing institutional knowledge, energy, and resources is a key component in promoting economic growth, stimulating public-private research partnerships, developing an entrepreneurial and talented workforce, and building a sustainable academic program model to graduate the next generation of creative problem-solvers who are socially engaged and community-oriented residents. Thus, the rapidly emerging field of entrepreneurship education warrants innovative approaches to delivering knowledge and challenges educators to develop opportunities within the classroom to bridge theory and practice within the entrepreneurship curriculum.

In 2015, more than 300 schools were identified by \textit{Entrepreneur} and the Princeton Review as offering entrepreneurship studies. According to Robert Franek, The Princeton Review's Senior VP-Publisher, those institutions that were identified as the top 25 undergraduate schools in \textit{The Princeton Review's Top Schools for Entrepreneurship Studies for 2016}, all have faculties who are “… truly engaged in entrepreneurism. Their courses are rich with in-class and out-of-class experiential components, and the financial and networking
support their students and programs receive via donors and alumni is extraordinary.”

To stimulate the creative thought process and motivate students to develop innovative solutions to global issues, educators must develop ways to immerse students in active and experiential learning, and promote reflective practices for the students as well as practice it themselves. As I have investigated this topic, however, it appears that within the pedagogy of entrepreneurship education further study to support both the use and effects of reflective practices is warranted. As entrepreneurial education expands and gains relevance in both academic and public sectors, the need for pedagogical analysis is critical. Entrepreneurship education requires an empirical body all its own. Rather than accepting and adopting practices from other disciplines, we should begin “examining our teaching methodologies to identify those activities most relevant for present and future entrepreneurs we hope to assist” (Honig, 2004, p. 270).

The fundamental objective of this study was to explore the experience of 13 educators in entrepreneurship programs with an emphasis on their approaches to linking classroom and experiential learning and better understand how and if reflective practices are embedded within the curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

If entrepreneurship is an iterative process, then reflection is a key component in experiential learning, linking theory to books, practice to experience. (J. Millesen, interview, May 11, 2015). Teachers typically evaluate students throughout their learning process by requiring a written work or assignment, or a test that can be evaluated and measured. However, ways which student achievements are quantified are largely based
upon evaluating what the student has read or seen. Educators are continuously challenged to provide opportunities for students within their course of study to think and apply the knowledge that they’ve gained in real-time scenarios and situations.

Educators, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship, deal with subject matter that promotes creative thinking and innovative practices. By employing the habits of successful entrepreneurs to their own profession, educators have the opportunity to cultivate a classroom climate that encourages disruptive ideas and takes students on a non-traditional path to learning. Read/Research – Try/Apply – Think/Reflect.

The entrepreneurial process is a continuum of trial and error in an effort to create, solve and satisfy a need. Dewey defined reflection as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (1933 in Bleicher & Correia, 2011, p. 31). It is a “mental activity that builds a bridge between the human inner world of ideas, and the outside world of experience” (Bleicher & Correia, 2011, p. 31). Therefore, reflection should form the foundation of experiential learning. Incorporating opportunities for reflection that link knowledge imparted within the classroom to learning that takes place through experience is a critical function for those studying entrepreneurship and those that aspire to start their own venture.

Educators in this particular field of study are especially challenged in developing curriculum due to the diversity of students who may be in their classroom. Today’s entrepreneurs are no longer solely focused on business or technology, but come from areas of discipline ranging from the arts to engineering, and possess a wide variety of knowledge, experience and learning styles. Additionally, as the traditional perception of
the innovative trailblazer has dramatically evolved, we have seen women, minorities, new immigrants and those interested in a second career becoming more significant players in the entrepreneurial landscape. Consequently, the demography of today’s classroom consists of a diverse group of students seeking to learn and explore entrepreneurial strategies that inspire a new way of applying their knowledge and expertise. Developing relevant curriculum and meaningful educational experiences both inside and outside the classroom for each student will require creativity and an individualized program that both challenges and inspires the entrepreneurial spirit. Educators routinely administer exams to measure learning, but the knowledge imparted through books and lectures is not enough. (Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002, p. 66). Absent the opportunity for engaged and active learning, the student may depart the classroom “book-smart,” but will be limited in applying that knowledge to real-life situations. This study is focused on how educators develop and implement experiential teaching strategies to create a robust curriculum that incorporates both classroom and applied learning opportunities.

**Definition of Terms**

Following is a list of key terms and definitions as used in the context of this study:

*Entrepreneurship education:* This is the process by which students learn the relevant skills necessary to develop a product or service and launch a venture with the goal of becoming self-employed.

*Experiential learning:* This study is based in the theory of John Dewey in that “learning by doing” students have the opportunity to create value for the betterment of themselves and others. Implicit in this definition is that learning contains the four main
components of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

*Reflective practice:* These are formal and informal activities that allow the opportunity to thoughtfully consider an event or interaction and facilitate self-discovery that leads to the refinement of future behaviors.

**Significance of the Study**

As an emerging field, entrepreneurship education continues to receive attention within the academy, and in corporate settings, thus it’s important that continuing research be done to inform educators developing models for experiential learning in this arena. Much like the iterative process that entrepreneurs employ in solving problems, teachers must evaluate and re-evaluate their methods of instruction and develop new delivery techniques based on active, engaged and experiential learning. By reviewing best practices in experiential learning and adapting models developed by outstanding educators in their field, a new curriculum for entrepreneurship education can be deployed that addresses active learning and teaching to create a meaningful learning experience inside and outside the classroom setting.

**Research Questions**

The central research question is: **What are the experiences of educators in implementing experiential learning pedagogies and how is reflective practice embedded into those?** To answer this question, I propose to conduct a hermeneutic phenomenological study using in-depth individual interviews with entrepreneurship educators within their environmental contexts. Following the guidance of van Maanen (2011), this research question will require me to enter the world of the educator to
develop a thorough understanding of the experience. The findings of this study may be used to understand more fully the challenges faced by entrepreneurship educators in forming meaningful and well-conceived experiential learning endeavors and embedding reflective practices within the curriculum. The findings of this study may also be useful in curriculum development and establish methodologies for educators to conduct well-led experiential learning endeavors that are impactful for both the teacher and the student.

More broadly, information collected from interviews will attempt to answer the following:

1) How do educators in nationally recognized entrepreneurship programs approach developing and incorporating active and experiential learning into their curriculum?

2) How do these educators engage students in activities that link theory and practice and stimulate personal reflection?

3) Do these educators regularly practice self-reflection? And if so, is this the result of having participated in particular learning programs in the course of their academic studies?

4) How do these educators provide a setting for each participant to clearly identify individual interest in a creative manner?

5) In what ways do these educators feel experiential learning activities have an impact on developing students’ creative problem-solving skills?

Limitations of the Study

This study may be limited by variables outside the general control of the researcher in the following ways:
Universities were selected using lists developed by nationally recognized resources based on their established criteria.

The study is based upon data collected in interviews with 13 different educators in entrepreneurship programs from 11 US universities.

The researcher’s training and education in strategic and entrepreneurial management could introduce a bias. To minimize potential bias, a research assistant was engaged to assist in the coding and data analysis process.

Summary

The study will examine how educators teaching in undergraduate entrepreneurship programs create the environment necessary to bridge the learning that takes place inside and outside the classroom. When students learn how to think reflectively and carefully consider alternatives, they are well-positioned to tackle the entrepreneurial challenges associated with balancing social and commercial objectives; identifying and securing a diverse resource base; and engaging groups in the change process. In concert with the student learning experience, educators also have a unique opportunity for experiential learning. Indeed, each class, each day, each semester provides a plethora of experiences upon which educators may reflect and build to form new and creative approaches to transforming their classrooms into dynamic learning environments. In all fields, but particularly within the discipline of entrepreneurship education, it is essential that educators challenge themselves to practice innovative and creative teaching approaches and not remain stagnant in methodology and delivery.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The lived experiences of 13 different educators teaching in undergraduate entrepreneurship programs in the United States with emphasis on the experiential learning component of each program will be explored in this study. In the course of the interview process it is also hoped to identify if and how reflective practices are embedded within the pedagogy.

This chapter begins with definitions and provides an overview of the history, philosophy, psychology and educational foundations of experiential learning. The following section focuses on the need for experiential learning and contemporary approaches to bridging classroom and experiential education within undergraduate entrepreneurship programs.

Defining Experiential Education

While research continues to grow in the area of learning through experience, further investigation is warranted to more clearly define key components that activate the process. In exploring the theoretical framework, the work of Spreitzer, McCall and Mahoney (1997) provides context to components of effective teaching strategies that facilitate the embedding of experiential learning activities within the curriculum.

Studies indicate that experience plays a critical role in developing knowledge and self-awareness and is an established adult learning theory (Ng, Dyne, & Ang, 2009). Researchers seeking to better understand the learning process (Illeris, 2007) have investigated the basic philosophy of active and experiential learning to develop models of management learning. The following model by D.A. Kolb has been strongly supported as an effective model of experiential learning:
The model suggests that those individuals gaining the greatest benefits from experiential learning will have completed all four stages (Ng et al., 2009) and is referenced in numerous studies to support and promote experiential learning theory and practice (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2005). In their work, Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) emphasized that an experience without meaning is simply an event that just happens. Further, Dixon (1999) concludes that true experiential learning must include interpreting - or reflecting - upon the experience, processing those both in a holistic way, and then translating that learning to impact future decisions and actions.

Some scholars have criticized Kolb's model due to its strong emphasis on the individual experience and lack of attention to political, social, and other aspects of the learning cycle (Kayes, 2002; Reynolds & Vince, 2007; Vince, 1998). However, Holman, Pavlica, and Thorpe (1997) contend that the historical and social position of the learner
cannot be separated from the individual and that the entire makeup of the person is engaged in the learning process. In a related study, Reynolds (1998) proposed the idea that critical thinking differs from reflection in that it involves an analysis of assumptions within the context of the task or problem but not explicitly directed at one's self. Also aligned with this group of researchers, Vince (1998), called out the experiential learning model in itself as having only a "first-order" process; a “second-order” process would require reflection upon one’s experiences.

It has been argued that models of experiential learning must include critical reflection to effectively promote learning from experience. Despite the accepted relevance of Kolb’s model of experiential learning, it does not identify the key factors that promote that learning. And while the model includes “reflective observation” as a component of the cycle, it does not clearly identify the types of reflective practices and activities that promote personal growth and knowledge transformation. I would argue that absent a reflective component, experiential learning is only an experiment. Therefore, a more robust model that incorporates reflection within the experiential learning cycle is needed.

In my research, I felt it was relevant to recognize the different types of experiential learning, as specific and overlapping teaching approaches may be appropriate for each.

Active Learning: Active learning has been employed in classroom settings as a way to more fully engage students in the learning process. Types of activities often include presentations and case studies along with simulations, debates and role-plays.
These strategies generally accompany classroom lecture in the traditional sense (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2009).

The history of active learning as a defined teaching methodology traces back to the early writings of John Dewey (1916-1997). For Dewey, learning requires that students take an active role by testing ideas against reality. His writings in the early 1900's provided a theoretical foundation for active learning. However, it wasn't until Bonwell and Eison (1991) published their book, *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom*, that literature on this topic began to grow as they not only identified specific strategies but also explained how to use them in classroom settings.

Notable works that followed include Meyers’ and Jones’ (1993) *Promoting Active Learning: Strategies for the College Classroom*; a book that outlined ways to incorporate small-group discussion, cooperative projects, simulations, role-plays and case studies into college classrooms. Another publication of note is, *Inspiring Active Learning: A Handbook for Teachers* (Harmin, 1994). The premise is to promote a holistic approach to teaching by adopting active-learning strategies that increase student motivation and self-confidence (Wurdinger et al., 2009).

Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (in Wurdinger et al., p. 8) found that “when students are actively engaged in the learning process, they not only understand more complex materials but can transfer their learning from one problem-solving context to another.”

Broadening more traditional definitions, Fink (2003) describes active learning as a "combination of experience and reflection" (p. 67). His view is more aligned with experiential learning where students may have to leave the classroom to get direct
experience. Whether it's a debate or role-play, the goal for Fink is to get students talking about the course content, and then have them reflect on how they might apply the information in real-life settings.

Today there is a wealth of research that documents the effectiveness of active and experiential learning. Incorporating these strategies in the classroom requires the educator to release a degree of control to facilitate a classroom environment for students to freely express their ideas, which hopefully inspires exciting and unexpected dialogue. Thus, students become actively engaged in the learning experience, challenging each other's ideas and thinking critically about how they feel.

Problem-Based Learning and Inquiry-Based Learning: Developing solutions based on focused and in-depth investigation of a particular problem or issue is the essence of problem-based learning. In so doing, it provides opportunities for learners to “work collaboratively, use their informal and formal prior knowledge, engage in constructivism, and develop their self-directed learning skills” (Schmidt, Loyens, Van Gog, & Paas, 2007, p. 92). This educational approach organizes curriculum and instruction around situational challenges, facilitating the students' abilities to gather and apply knowledge from multiple disciplines to develop the best logical solution. Through these exercises, students develop a broad spectrum of practical skills as they conduct their research experiments and determine solutions to the problem, all under the guidance of teachers acting as cognitive coaches (Major & Mulvihill, 2017). When curriculum is derived from the experience of the learner, coherence and relevance increase, and learning is viewed as constructing rather than receiving (Wurdinger et al., 2009).
Inquiry-based learning follows a similar approach but differs by allowing learners to determine their own problems to solve or questions to answer (Igo, Moore, Ramsey, & Ricketts, 2008). Also referred to as discovery-learning – shaped by cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner as a reaction against traditional memorization teaching methods – this methodology relies heavily upon elements of self-directed learning (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006). The use of pure discovery learning, where students receive little or no instructor guidance, has lessened since its inception as new insights have emerged on how the brain learns and stores knowledge.

Researchers on both sides of the problem-based vs. inquiry-based outcomes do concur on some essential points about its instructional effectiveness:

- Learning increases when the student experience is accompanied by structure and guidance from an instructor and when the student incorporates problem-solving processes learned as a result of previous experiences when undertaking new challenges or provided through other means.

- Learning increases when the instructors or facilitators use methods to assist in categorizing and storing information into long-term memory, such as task structuring, modeling, coaching, hinting, probing, paraphrasing, and redirecting (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan & Chinn, 2007). Incorporating periods of reflection into the curriculum allows the learner to introduce and retain information into their working memory (Sweller, 2004).

Project-Based Learning: Based upon the research of Pearlman (2009), those students who will best be prepared to take on the challenges of the rapidly changing world of technology will need to be skilled in learning and thinking, possess the social
skills needed to build a supportive network and have a sufficient resource base to compete in the future.

The project-based teaching method results in meaningful learning experiences as it challenges and inspires students who design projects based on their individual interests and learning style. “Students become invested in their learning outcome as these projects are active, not passive; are stimulating and relevant to the student; allow for autonomy and self-directed learning; increase communication skills, and enhance motivation to learn” (Railsback, 2002, p. 9).

Many practitioners such as Ron Newell, co-director of EdVisions; the Buck Institute for Education; and Wurdinger Haar, Hugg, and Bezon, have all agreed that project-based learning places emphasis upon student-centered learning, as opposed to teacher-directed learning. Students design projects that may require solving multiple problems before they can complete them. As such, this teaching approach takes more time than traditional methods of learning like the lecture format, because students may have to undergo multiple attempts before completing the project to their satisfaction. This is an essential concept for educators to understand before implementing this type of learning in their classroom, as it requires active and engaged participation from both the student and the educator.

Research on standards-based teaching, conducted by Cornell and Clarke (1999), found that students involved in project-based learning expressed a higher level of engagement than with other forms of learning. This conclusion was based on the findings that project-based structures provided a platform for collaborative opportunities with classmates; a self-directed learning environment, and a forum in which to discover and
cultivate skills all while completing the task at their own pace and learning style. However, a significant finding emerged that may identify a contributing factor that limits the broader use of experiential learning programs throughout the academy. Two paradoxes identified were, "less teacher talk requires more teacher time" and "free-ranging self-directed inquiry depends on a tight design structure" (Cornell & Clarke, 1999, p. 94). Therefore, while there is substantial research to illustrate the benefits of active and experiential learning, incorporating those strategies and designing challenging projects requires substantial commitment from the instructors developing those lessons. However, they also indicated that once the curriculum was developed, it allowed them to dedicate more attention to guiding students through the process (Wurding et al., 2010).

Service-Learning: This experiential learning approach is well known and has been utilized widely for decades. However, misconceptions still exist as a true service-learning experience must include: (1) a plan and goal that fulfills a community need, (2) action, and (3) reflection (Berger Kaye, 2010). By rephrasing the term from service-learning to learning from service, the focus shifts to the learning that comes from the experience, rather than the service itself (Wurding et al., 2009).

A fourth, and vital component of this approach is the opportunity for the learners involved to share in a planned and meaningful way what they have accomplished and learned. Some educators refer to the four stages as preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration, and use the acronym, PARD to describe the formula or model they use to implement service-learning (Berger Kaye, 2010). A modification to this last phase is to add some way of evaluating the level of performance or the quality of the experience of
the learners. In this case, the acronym, PARE, has been used, with the "E" representing evaluation rather than demonstration (Gupta, 2006).

Service-learning as a teaching methodology has grown and evolved to the point that the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) recently announced that as of 2017, “more than 1.2 million Americans have served in AmeriCorps and Peace Corps providing more than 1.4 billion hours of service and earning more than $3.3 billion in education scholarships to pay for college or repay student loans.” (https://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/500-organizations-pledge-commitment-hiring-americorps-and-peace-corps). Service learning continues to be incorporated into curricula throughout the United States and volunteering among college students increased over twenty percent between 2002 and 2005 (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2017).

Place-Based Learning: The central tenant of place-based learning is that it is "rooted in what is local – the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place" (Rural School and Community Trust, 2003, para. 1, http://www.ruraledu.org/). In the past, this learning methodology has focused mainly on environmental contexts (Cole, 2007; Graham, 2007), but over time, has shifted toward partnerships between schools and addressing social and other issues within their communities (Promise of Place, 2008a, para. 1). The premise of the method is to expand the learner's knowledge, through a hands-on approach, to the greater global impact of challenges experienced at the local level. The mantra "Think Globally, Act Locally," serves as an example of the local community's role in addressing issues within their realm that also affects the global community.
While place-based education still promotes taking students out of their familiar environments and immersing them in unfamiliar surroundings, the focus has shifted from placing students in remote locations to those that are local. For example, urban-based opportunities can and do ignite people-place relationships that are as strong as, if not stronger then, those ignited by rural environments. According to Sarkar and Frazier (2008, p. 30), “Motivation for learning was found to be higher when it involved places where learners already had a degree of interest, curiosity or knowledge.”

It is now an accepted practice that place-based learning can occur anywhere, whether it be in urban, suburban, or rural contexts (Sarkar et al., 2008, p. 30). The premise is that when learners develop connections to a place and have adequate levels of skills and opportunities to act, they become more actively participative in their communities. The more community involvement there is, the more the local social capital increases, resulting in healthier communities (Powers, 2004).

Richard Louv's (2005) book, Last Child in the Woods, states, "When we challenge schools to incorporate place-based learning in the natural world we will help students realize that school isn't supposed to be a polite form of incarceration, but a portal to the wider world" (2007, para 10; Retrieved from https://orionmagazine.org/article/leave-no-child-inside/). As a challenge to teachers to teach more than just what will be tested, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 reinforced the need for people-place relationships. Supporters of the bill claim the problems of childhood obesity, detachment from nature, climate change, and a narrowing curriculum due to NCLB have led to a need for this act (No Child Left Inside Coalition, 2009). Detachment from nature and strong
connections to technology-oriented pastimes have been identified as significant concerns for the future (Louv, 2005).

Reflective Learning: John Dewey defines reflective thought as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge that supports further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1933, p. 118). His work was primarily based on his methodologies, and he saw reflection as “thinking that consists of turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious thought” (Dewey, 1933, p. 118).

Other influential theorists include Habermas (2002), who focused on the way reflection plays a role in how ideas are processed and then constructed into knowledge, and the work of Shon (1983, 1987 in Munby, 1989) who reviewed the impact of reflection in the development of professional knowledge. More recently, Dr. Jennifer Ann Moon has published several works including “Reflection in Learning and Professional Development” (1999a) and “A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning (2004) and Critical Thinking, an exploration in theory and practice” (2008). These works are highly regarded as contemporary approaches to furthering research in the field of reflective learning and related program development.

Moon has defined reflection as one type of “mental processing or thinking that is used to fulfill a purpose or achieve an anticipated outcome" (Moon, 1999, p. 66). This process is applied to more complex ideas for which no obvious solution is evident and is “based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding and possibly emotions that we already possess” (Moon 1999, pp. 91-152). Much of Moon’s work is based upon the theoretical approaches of the four classical approaches of Dewey, Habermas, Kolb,
and Schon as previously noted. She outlines the five stages of learning as illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: *Reflection in learning and professional development theory and practice (Moon, 1999)*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Noticing</th>
<th>The student has to register the topic, event or incident as being interesting or important in some way.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Making sense</td>
<td>The student thinks more about what they have noticed and tries to understand it better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Making meaning</td>
<td>The student starts to ask questions and to connect ideas together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Working with meaning</td>
<td>The student makes links to other ideas and events. They would probably refer to literature and other research. At this point, reflection on the learning is likely to be taking place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Transformative learning</td>
<td>The student has reached the point where they can formulate new ideas of their own. They know what they would do if a similar situation arose in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moon further argues that it is only in stages 4 and 5 of the model that reflection on the learning is likely to be taking place (Moon, 1999).

The research of Marton, Hounsell, and Entwistle (1997) also contends that there are different levels of understanding when learning a task. A ‘deep approach’ supposes the intention of the learner to fully digest a concept into current thoughts and processes and reconsider or alter future actions as a result. In contrast, a ‘surface approach’ does not
result in the integration of new ideas for the learner. Concepts are not linked to previous ideas or understandings and while applicable at the moment, are not retained for reference.

On the basis of Moon’s model and critical reflective theory, reflection relates to learning in that:

1) It plays a role in the deeper approaches to learning;
2) Re-processing (Eisner, 2017) is a reflective process that facilitates retention and learning;
3) When practiced in the ‘deep approach,’ reflection causes the learner to re-formulate ideas and integrate them with new understandings (Vygotsky, 1978 in Gauvain & Cole, 2009).

**Historical Foundations of Experiential Education**

Paul Petzoldt is considered one of the founders of outdoor education and wrote a significant amount of material in his research to develop theory and discover - through his own experience - new and more efficient teaching methodologies. He believed that an instructor should be adaptable and flexible in seizing learning opportunities as they are encountered in the natural environment while systematically covering a curriculum (Petzoldt & Ringholz, 1984).

While Petzoldt's focus was on outdoor education and learning experience, it was the desire to build leaders and advocates for environmental issues that lead him to hone experiential learning opportunities within that setting.

Researchers have defined experiential education in many different ways and in many different publications (Joplin, 1981; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Itin, 1999). One
widely accepted definition comes from the Association for Experiential Education (2004) defining experiential education as "both a philosophy and a methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values" (Retrieved from http://www.aee.org/what-is-ee). A core component of this definition is the differentiation between experiential education as a philosophy with reflective practice as a fundamental tenet, and experiential education as a methodology.

The Kolb model as previously referenced in Figure 1, is the basis for many experiential learning initiatives but does not prescribe an intended learning outcome or goal. "Experiential education as philosophy implies that there is an intended aim toward which the experiential learning process is directed. In this sense, the intent of the experiential education is just that – an intentional, purposeful approach to teaching and learning" (Breunig, 2017, p. 218).

**Philosophical Foundations of Experiential Education**

Experience-based learning and learning passed through storytelling is the underpinning of education in the Western world and can be traced to the earliest forms of education and teaching. However, with the establishment of the first state public school system in the 1660’s books became more readily available, and education that had previously only been accessed by the elite was now affordable to many. As a result, there needed to be a more efficient way to educate students and workers and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the workplace. In many instances, keeping up with the demand from the growing student population caused the delivery of curriculum to resemble an assembly line by which productive workers and civil-minded
citizens were produced en masse (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 2004). The curriculum was entirely based upon social utility with the goal of creating an educated workforce that would contribute to the greater societal good.

While many philosophers have shaped the field of experiential learning as we know it today, significant contributions by the following have reformed experience-based teaching and learning and the development of curriculum that continues to evolve in an attempt to address ever-changing social issues.

Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) was influenced by Italian educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and supported the development of school curriculum guided by the following principles: First, teachers must assess the past learning and current knowledge of each student to effectively prepare to teach. Next, a gathering of supporting materials and building of a schedule or syllabus is needed to illustrate how the content will be delivered. The third step is for the education to relate the new information to the prior learnings of the student to create association which allows for greater retention of the information. The final steps include developing an understanding of the general rules and principles, and how they apply in practice (Herbart & Mulliner, 1898). The similarities between Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle (Figure 1) and Herbart's learning principles are arguably in alignment.

William James (1842-1910). The work of James, along with colleague Charles Sanders Pierce, is based in the conclusion that people develop their knowledge and belief system through "habits of action," and that ideas and truths develop through experience. James and Pierce are considered to be “classical pragmatists,” and their philosophical
views found the basis by which more recent scholars have built theory for the practical use of experiential and active learning strategies.

Colonel Francis Parker (1837-1902) and John Dewey (1859-1952). Parker established the foundation for the “Quincy system,” a methodology structured to teach spelling, writing, reading and thinking simultaneously (Henson, 2003). Dewey, a colleague of Parker's, who is often referred to as the founder of experiential education, took the basic concepts developed by Parker and applied a different approach by considering the student’s experience as forming the basis of the school curriculum. His theory is founded in the belief that students should not be restricted to learning within the walls of a classroom, but that they also needed to have an understanding of the practical application of those theories and knowledge by experiencing learning and activity within the local community (Dewey, 1904; 1938).

Further, Dewey (1916/1944) believed that experience is one means to broaden students' knowledge as it brings awareness only achieved through immersion. Thus, future actions become "intelligent actions that are considered rather than impulsive and shaped by information garnered from previous experiences” while bearing in mind one's goal or purpose (one that serves society) (Warren et al., 2008, p. 81).

William Heard Kilpatrick (1918) developed a form of progressive education known as the “project method” originally used in early childhood education and later instrumental in the practical application of Dewey's theoretical principles. Kilpatrick believed that the role of the teacher was to assist the student in developing a project of personal interest and then guide the student through all aspects of that project to promote the opportunity for exploration of their surrounding environment. Further, he believed the
curriculum should allow opportunities for a series of experiences in which a student may develop conclusions based on multiple points of information and engagement (Kilpatrick, 1925). The theories of both Kilpatrick and Dewey are fundamental to my research in that participation in an isolated experience does not necessarily constitute experiential learning. I would argue that one instance is not an experience, it is an experiment. Experiences are formed on past experience, reflection upon those experiences, and the perceived outcome of the current experience. Dewey (1938) refers to the concept of “continuity of experience” and argues that experience is genuine only when it is purposeful and directed toward an intentional end. Clearly, the groundwork for what we today generally perceive of as experiential education is based in the foundational work of the progressivists and the importance of education in affecting societal change (Warren et al., 2008).

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) and Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). These two educators are mainly responsible for bringing the ideals of experienced-based and progressive education into the classroom. Montessori developed the Montessori Method based on the belief that the aim of education is twofold: biological and social. The biological focusing on the natural development of the individual; and the social in preparing individuals as community citizens (Warren et al., 2008). The method has been successfully used in diverse cultures for the past century and promotes the principles of self-discovery by providing an environment that supports education through creative learning through the senses and intellect (Montessori, 1974).

The philosophy of Steiner's Waldorf School is that the betterment of society begins with a solid educational foundation in an environment that supports creativity and
artistic development and openness to new and different ideas, people, and opportunities. The curriculum used in Waldorf schools is customized to fit the child's various stages of development emphasizing imagination in learning and free play in a classroom environment that is homelike and incorporates natural materials (Toronto Waldorf School, 1972, http://www.torontowaldorfschool.com).

Both these educators played significant roles in developing models for experiential education in the K-12 school system, but as with all theorists noted here, the philosophical foundations underlying the practical benefits of experiential education are broad reaching. The following section focuses specifically on the pedagogy of experiential education as it is practiced in higher education.

The work of Dewey and other progressivists was instrumental in founding the first experienced-based programs at institutions such as the Laboratory School of the University of Missouri, The Chicago School, and Teachers College at Columbia University, for example (Warren et al., 2008). At the time, curriculum focused on practical skills in agriculture, home economics, and mechanical and building competencies. The genre of reading, writing and arithmetic assignments all aligned with these activities to the extent practical (Good & Teller, 1969).

In 1974, a large number of college and university professionals met for a conference that resulted in the formation of the Association for Experiential Education (Miner & Boldt, 1981). Their mission is to, "…develop and promote experiential education…support professional development, theoretical advancement, and the evaluation of experiential education worldwide" (aeec.org). However, more than two decades later, Michael Gass and colleagues Miles and Priest (1999) of the University of
New Hampshire, reported that the establishment of most university programs was not department-driven, but was instead self-designed programs of select individuals or faculty at particular institutions.

The above examples support the relevance of experiential learning within the educational arena at all stages of learning development. When the experience is guided by a mentor or educator and opportunities for reflection are embedded, the experience then truly becomes experiential learning and provides an opportunity for transformation of the learner. Within higher education, we are beginning to see more degree-granting programs and certification programs provide a platform to incorporate targeted experiential learning opportunities into the curriculum and link theory to practice. And, while some disciplines have embraced the philosophy more than others, there is opportunity to expand cross-disciplinary opportunities in both undergraduate and graduate offerings (Warren, et al., 2008). Additionally, institutions can do more to provide support for practitioners seeking to incorporate experiential opportunities into their curriculum. It is easy to espouse the theory, but it can be time-consuming and challenging to design practical activities and engage in useful experiential practice within the classroom. Case studies can provide a starting point, but as educators, we need to better understand the transformative potential of active learning within the classroom and the benefits of experiential education.

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reinforces the intentional use of reflection and synthesis in experiential education. Experiential methodology facilitates such enriched environments by introducing challenges through social interaction, feedback, and active participation.”

For experiential education's philosophical underpinnings to gain credence and become embedded and relevant in practice, it is fundamentally necessary to move beyond the shallow definition of "learning by doing." This definition marginalizes experiential education to an experiment, rather than an experience. One way for educators to address this issue is to incorporate active learning opportunities into the curricula (Revans, 1979). Further, including purposeful opportunities for reflection promotes student development by linking theory to practice and facilitates the process of self-discovery and personal growth.

Prior studies indicate that practitioners in the field largely support the benefits of experiential learning, yet, experiential education remains short on theory and research. But Dewey's vision reminds us that teaching through experience is not easy, and practitioners can quickly fall into complacency. The field of brain-based learning provides a source of information to assist experiential educators in clarifying how and why the methodology is effective (Roberts, 2002).

Historically, educators have designed curriculum after first determining the desired outcome (Rugg & Counts, 1926; Bloom, 1956). That paradigm closely follows the description of curriculum design still used by many professional groups today (Longnecker & Feinstein, 1991). Although curriculum has continuously evolved over time, historically, academia is resistant to change and is more comfortable in continuing the status-quo (Rugg et al., 1926).
Today, curriculum design frequently fails to consider the learning styles of students, and the problems in its design are exacerbated by highly specialized faculty who are not qualified to build interdisciplinary programs and cannot agree on goals and learning outcomes (Carland & Carland, 1997).

For example, entrepreneurship programs have typically been housed in business schools where the curriculum has traditionally been taught through lecture. Faculty have developed this style of teaching through no fault of their own, they’ve simply followed the model of teaching that has permeated the university system in the United States for decades. And, while the professor may be an expert in the field, he or she may not also possess the skills and qualities of a “good” teacher.

The traditional style of teaching as referred to above is very linear in nature and assumes that students who work hard, complete assignments on time and are dedicated and motivated will be successful, regardless of the method of delivery. In other words, self-motivation is the driver for these students and has limited association with the quality of teaching or the teacher. The counter to this notion is that those students who do not achieve high grades lack motivation, and do not apply themselves and will not do well no matter the teaching approach used. Continued research on learning styles emphasizes that while academic achievement may be an indicator of learning and accumulated knowledge, there is significant opportunity to re-structure the teaching paradigm to accommodate particular learning styles and effectively increase the learning rate of all students.

The field of cognitive psychology has been largely founded upon Karl Jung's (1921/1971) theory of personality types which can be illustrated by broad category types
on opposite ends of the spectrum of an axis. "Introvert vs. Extravert," on the Y-axis, and "Thinking vs. Feeling" on the X-axis. David Kolb’s cycle of experiential learning (1974), depicts a learning process based on an experiential approach to making information meaningful (Healey & Jenkins, 2000), Kolb (1976, 1984). As a result, the following four learning styles have been developed:

The Convergent Style focuses on the practical application of ideas that generate from active learning and experimentation, decision making and problem-solving.

The Divergent Style emphasizes observation and reflection as key components of achieving concrete and meaningful experiences.

The Assimilation Style also includes observation and reflection with an emphasis on the ability to create theoretical models based on inductive reasoning

The Accommodation Style incorporates active and continuous experimentation while developing plans and carrying out tasks in pursuit of new experiences.

Based upon the work of theorists including Adler, Freud, Jung, Kretschmer, Maslow, Myers, and Briggs, and Sullivan, Keirsey, and Bates (1984) four primary learning styles have been developed over time and labeled SP, SJ, NF, or NT as illustrated in the left column of the table below, and are called temperaments. Cross-referencing these temperaments with Kolb's learning styles results in a comparative structure of the characteristics of each temperament and style as displayed in Table 2 as follows:
Table 2: *Comparison of Keirsey & Bates Temperaments and Kolb’s Learning Styles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keirsey &amp; Bates Temperaments</th>
<th>Kolb's Learning Styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SJ Temperament</td>
<td>Convergent Learning Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SJ is decisive, a traditionalist, likes policies, rules, schedules, standards and is resistant to change, but can be pessimistic and critical and can preserve useless rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SP Temperament</td>
<td>Accommodation Learning Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SP goes into everything full speed ahead is practical, flexible, open-minded, excited, and enthusiastic, a risk taker, but dislikes theory or routine and lives for the moment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NT Temperament</td>
<td>Assimilation Learning Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NT is a visionary and architect of change who enjoys complexity, hungers for competency, knowledge, and mastery, but loses interest in a task before completion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NF Temperament</td>
<td>Divergent Learning Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NF is personable, idealistic, empathic, and charismatic, focuses on individuals, and is participative, but makes decisions based on personal likes and dislikes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research shows that individuals who track as Divergent and Accommodation learners function better when concrete experience is incorporated in the learning process (Kolb, 1984). By example, in a survey of Business Administration students, Kolb (1984), found that students within that discipline tended to display the Accommodation learning style. Subsequent research has shown that many entrepreneurship students are
Accommodation learners and would likely be more engaged in a learning environment that includes experiential and active learning concepts (Carland et al., 1997).

The personality traits of the Accommodation learning style have remained consistent over time and are vital components of the entrepreneurial spirit. As student-development and learning theory continues to evolve, it is critical that educators become more aware of how learning styles impact students' interest level and ultimately their performance. The notion of building teams based on learning styles and personality traits has become more widely-spread in the industry and could have a practical place in the classroom as well. In this regard, inter-disciplinary programs provide excellent opportunities for educators to create multi-faceted assignments that challenge and inspire the individual strengths of a dynamic work group or team.

Foundations of Entrepreneurship Education

Prior to 1970, entrepreneurship courses were offered at very few colleges and universities. Later that decade, the work of David Birch brought attention to the impact of small businesses on job creation and business schools began increasing programming. Then in the 1980s, microcomputers empowered entrepreneurs by creating opportunities for software firms and also enabled students with new tools for business simulation (McIntyre & Roche, 1999).

The Harvard Business School developed a pedagogy based primarily on case studies and the occasional classroom visit by an experienced entrepreneur who shared practical advice and motivation (Ronstadt, 1985). Soon after, concepts began to develop that took a more holistic approach to include ‘social learning’ and ‘situated learning,’ based on Lave and Wenger’s (1991) work. Relationships with key people were seen as an
important factor in influencing the learning process (Hamilton, 2011; Karatas-Ozkan & Chell, 2010).

Entrepreneurial learning originates in the notion that individuals can be taught concepts and skills to recognize opportunities, assemble resources and initiate a business venture. Researchers have also described entrepreneurial learning as a change in orientation through the process of knowledge accumulation (Deakins & Freel, 1998; Cope & Watts, 2000). However, drawing upon adult learning theory, it has been noted that “one can experience something and yet learn nothing” (Cope, 2003; Taylor & Thorpe, 2004) and therefore, it is essential that both action and reflection be included in the learning process as a means to make meaningful assessment of past action.

**Incorporating Experiential Learning into the Entrepreneurship Curriculum – from Theory to Practice**

Entrepreneurs are action-oriented and learn primarily from tacit knowledge, or by doing (Reuber & Fischer, 1999; Smilor, 1997). Therefore, educators must strike a balance between the classroom setting where formal teaching takes place with opportunities for more informal or experiential education. “Informal education can be defined as the life-long process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, attitudes, insights, and skills from daily experiences and exposure to the environment – at home, at work, at play” (Coombs, 1985, p. 24), (Honig, 2004). One way to incorporate informal education in the formal educational curriculum is through action learning (Revans, 1979).

Successful entrepreneurs are ones who are able to quickly assemble resources and develop nimble strategies to overtake competitors (Honig, 2004). Thus the "fight between two armies is comparable to the competitive struggle between a market leader and the
rest" (Onoda in Campbell & Roberts (1986, p. 190). Entrepreneurship, like military strategy, requires the constant review and refinement of goals, outcomes, plans, and resources to remain relevant and competitive in an ever-changing landscape. Therefore, the curriculum design should incorporate and strongly focus upon applied and active learning to prepare entrepreneurs to think, act and react in a real-time environment as opposed to strictly teaching theoretical principles (Honig, 2004).

In the traditional academic setting, information is delivered methodically through lectures, structured assignments, and defined deliverables. These are practical techniques for students to develop sound foundations for analytical decision making, and students are comfortable in this environment of clearly articulated expectations. However, this pedagogy is not indicative of the practical needs of entrepreneurial education, and this method alone is not sufficient to prepare graduates for the complicated issues faced by today’s managers (Mintzberg et al., 2002) or adults (Wood, 1995). Further, entrepreneurs face unique challenges that require them to solve problems that are often loosely defined. Learning to manage unpredictability maximizes their potential for effectiveness and better prepares them to tackle real-life situations (Chi, Glaser & Rees, 1982).

Figure 2 below illustrates how a passive learning model may be transformed to one that is active through the incorporation of experiential learning techniques. Additionally, this model incorporates the opportunity for individuals to experience failure in a supportive environment with the goal of developing techniques to prepare for
unexpected outcomes. In the course of the active learning model, the student experiences personal growth and gains confidence in the ability to manage future challenges.

Figure 2: Shift from Passive to Active Learning (Venkataraman, n.d.)

http://slideplayer.com/slide/5814633/

Within the model we see that failure remains a key factor, supporting the standpoint of Piaget that failure constitutes a learning experience. With the proper structure and guidance, those students who are in a supportive environment and encouraged to reflect upon that failure are better prepared to avoid future failure.

Cultivating Reflective Practices within the Entrepreneurship Curriculum

The field of entrepreneurship education has evolved significantly over the past decade, however, action-based and experiential learning has remained a fundamental aspect. The extensive research of Gorman, Hanlon, and King (1997) illustrates support from peer educators and researchers to include active participation, both internal and
external to the classroom environment, as a teaching strategy. Activities could be structured to require a high-level of management and oversight or be entirely student-run. The objective is to provide a robust and practical learning experience that students can highlight to future employers as an activity that has prepared them for the job market.

According to Johannisson, (1991), successful entrepreneurs are highly confident; willing and able to shape and impact their environment; skilled in moving forward from vision to action, and have the ability to create supportive networks. Developing these traits and problem-solving skills as a student in a safe and supportive classroom environment facilitates growth and potential as a future entrepreneur and innovator (Liñán, 2004). An underlying assumption is that reflection is key to achieving self-awareness of one’s strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies. However, there has been limited evidence to date that reflective practices are embedded within the entrepreneurship curriculum to promote this level of development.

Action-based learning provides a real-time forum for problem-solving and facilitates the link between theory and practice. Achieving this with other students in teams mimics real-life work environments, and, in turn, promotes innovation and entrepreneurship (Robinson, Neergaard, Tanggaard, & Krueger, 2016). However, to act with informed intention, students need to first have a basic understanding of theory (Johannisson, 1991). In this way, theoretical knowledge alone does not sufficiently prepare a student for today's work environment. Employers are seeking entry-level workers who can illustrate project management and decision-making skills and the ability to develop appropriate solutions to real-time problems.
Decision-making based on sound theoretical knowledge is undoubtedly necessary for making proper choices in different situations (Winterhalder & Smith, 2000). But if educators only focus on teaching the theoretical, they may miss the opportunity to promote and facilitate the personal growth of the student. Providing an environment that supports critical reflection is one way to deepen knowledge and gain self-awareness. This self-knowledge is useful in determining how one might manage different obstacles and challenges and leads to increased learning performance (McCrindle & Christensen, 1995). Especially important to the entrepreneur is “orientation knowledge” gained through reflective practices according to Landström (2010).

"Orientation knowledge” is created when an individual weighs each aspect of the following pairs of concepts against the other: 1) parts and totality, 2) closeness and distance, 3) trust in criticism and 4) reflective action” (Molander 1996, in Landström 2010). In essence, those students who can constructively review their actions through self-reflection and feedback solicited from faculty and team members will be better entrepreneurs. The ability to adopt an "external" perspective of one's actions and modify behavior is indicative of a mature level of self-awareness that instills confidence and shows leadership (Rapp-Ricciardi, Garcia, & Archer, 2017).

As a field of study, entrepreneurship is much more fully developed in Europe and the United Kingdom than it is in the United States. Looking to those institutions for best practices, a study by Marie Löwegren, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Lund University (Internationalizing Entrepreneurship Education and Training Conference, 2006) reported that students are required as a part of the curricula to write "learning logs.” These individual diaries depict students' reflections on the learnings that have taken place over
the course of the last week. Students gather every three weeks throughout the term for a "learning seminar" to discuss the logs. The exercise is meant to encourage students to practice reflection and enhance their skills over time. This supports the theories of Kolb (1984), who emphasized the importance of reflection in engaging the learner. With the guidance of the instructor, the reflective journaling activity opens the opportunity for the student to ultimately move through Kolb's four stages to create a rewarding learning experience.

Learning theorist Len Semtonovitch Vygotsky (Hubbs & Brand, 2010), has promoted the use of reflective journals as a means of connecting feelings, thoughts and actions and as a method for self-exploration. Transformative learning takes place when the learner reviews, tests, and then explores new approaches and ultimately expands and diversifies their prior patterns of thinking (Hubbs & Brand, 2005).

At any point throughout an experiential learning activity, critical reflection can take place and may take many different forms. Written works such as journals, reports, and portfolios are relatively common. Presentations, performances and image-based summaries allow creative boundaries to be explored and shared. Each of these activities promotes different types reflection and optimizes the student learning experience through increased awareness of self and others. For example, cognitive reflection ponders the question of what was learned from the experience; effective reflection examines how the experience has changed an attitude or opinion and what the student feels as a result of the experience, and process reflection considers what students learn from the process itself. To fully appreciate the benefits of experiential learning, both educator and student should
view it as a continuous process. The first step is to define the activity or experience, then reflect upon it, conceptualize its meaning and impact and then take appropriate action.

I have a particular interest in the reflective process as an instructional tool and understanding if and how it impacts both students and instructors. As Leo van Lier (1996, p. 11) points out, "To learn something, one has to notice it and be motivated to do something about it through a conscious effort." If experience is the main ingredient for reflective thinking, I would argue that it’s only through reflection that theoretical concepts become part of the individual's frame of reference. Otherwise, they are guideposts that have been planted through reading, lecture, and other means but have no personal point of reference. The practice of reflection is critical as it builds the linkage between experience and theoretical conceptualization. Based on the literature review and supporting theory, educators within the field of entrepreneurship should consider the full spectrum of experiential and active learning. As the findings of Kohonen (2012) support, the activity itself does not provide a complete learning experience and requires critical reflection, framing, and conceptualization of the experience to achieve the fullest measure of learning.

**Outcomes**

Information collected from interviews will attempt to answer the following:

1) How do educators in nationally recognized entrepreneurship programs approach developing and incorporating active and experiential learning into their curriculum?

2) How do these educators engage students in activities that link theory and practice and stimulate personal reflection?
3) Do these educators regularly practice self-reflection? And if so, is this the result of having participated in experiential learning programs in the course of their academic studies?

4) How do these educators provide a setting for each participant to identify individual interest in a creative manner?

5) In what ways do these educators feel experiential learning activities have an impact on developing students’ creative problem-solving skills?

**In Summary - The Need for a Holistic approach to Experiential Learning within the Entrepreneurship Curriculum.**

Educators take on the responsibility of guiding and teaching students to become productive workers, citizens and, eventually self-directed life-long learners. In order to accomplish this, there is a need for the level of engagement to be enriched beyond traditional methods of instruction to promote active participation in the classroom, experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom and reflective practices as a key component of the curriculum.

Blackburn, Bober, O’Connell, and Pellino (1980) discovered that 73-83 percent of the 1,800 professors surveyed chose lecture as their primary method of instruction. In a more recent publication, Huba and Freed (2000) state that most college professors teach using the lecture method, but their research indicated that other methods are more effective in motivating students to learn. In 1996, the average attention span of college students was 15 to 20 minutes (Middendorf & Kalish, 1996) and that continues to decrease. It is no wonder that students are easily distracted by social media. Levitz, Noel, and Richter (1999) identify multiple reasons for incompletion of academic programs,
however, one reason is that students experience poor or indifferent teaching (p. 40). They suggest a cultural transformation is needed to encourage, promote and support faculty to become more student-centered, thus allowing more opportunities for active learning within the classroom (Wurdinger et al., 2009).

In a research report titled, Influence: A Study of the Factors Shaping Education Policy (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF], 2006) 11 of the 12 most influential people shaping educational policy in the United States at that time were outside the field of education. The lone academician, Linda Darling-Hammond is from Stanford University's School of Education and former executive director of the NCTAF from 1994 to 2001. The other 11 are politicians and entrepreneurs.

The field of education, then, might be wise to take some pointers on innovation and creativity from these entrepreneurs. Current policies and practices do not advance innovation and creativity; they promote the status quo and are so tightly woven into the fabric of academic culture that it may be difficult for educators to introduce new methods and develop a more holistic matrix for measuring student achievement and future potential. Rigid systems impede creativity and innovation because individuals are busy concentrating their efforts on following the policies and procedures, which in turn minimizes the amount of time they have for creative thought and action. Professors are evaluated based upon the number of publications and research activity they conduct, rather than their illustrated capacity to engage and empower their students.

At what point do educators allow students freedom to become innovative learners? Why aren't educators challenging students more often? We need more schools and educators that promote creativity and self-directed learning. Educators need to break
the mold and think differently about how they teach and how they measure achievement and future potential. Incorporating active and experiential learning strategies within the curriculum may be cumbersome and tedious, but highly rewarding for both the student and educator. Through interviews with educators in nationally recognized entrepreneurship programs, I have gathered their unique approaches to bridging classroom and experiential education and promoting reflective practices within undergraduate entrepreneurship programs to encourage and inspire those teaching in the field.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to examine techniques and strategies employed by 13 educators teaching in entrepreneurship programs in the United States to bridge classroom and experiential learning. This phenomenological study explores approaches used by those educators and their perceptions of its impact and effectiveness.

This research proposes to answer the following questions:

1. How do educators in nationally recognized entrepreneurship programs approach developing and incorporating active and experiential learning into their curriculum?
2. How do these teachers engage students in activities that link theory and practice and stimulate personal reflection?
3. Are these teachers themselves particularly skilled in reflective practices?
4. How do these teachers provide a setting for each participant to clearly identify individual interest in a creative manner?
5. In what ways do these teachers feel experiential learning activities have an impact on students' decisions to become entrepreneurs?

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research has been described as a research approach to understanding a specific phenomenon in the world without introduction of bias (Patton, 2001). As such, it requires that the researcher disassociate themselves from the subjects and material as much as possible and become an “observer” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Interviews and observations are typical methods for collecting data and surveys are also used in combination or on their own. This research methodology allows the researcher to
immerse themselves in the context of the area of study and free themselves from preconceptions to truly understand and feel the experiences of those engaged in the activity or phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002). In this environment, the researcher also has the opportunity to employ emergent design flexibility and adapt to changing situations to uncover specific areas of interest that may not have been evident at the onset of the investigation (Patton, 2002, p.40). Thus, conducting research in the natural setting is ideal as the observer has the ability to fully activate their skills by observing and interacting with the subject(s) in their natural environment (Creswell, 2013).

Phenomenological inquiry has been recommended as a research methodology in the entrepreneurship domain by Gartner and Birley (2002): "It is our opinion that many substantive issues in entrepreneurship are rarely addressed and that many of the key questions in entrepreneurship can only be asked through qualitative methods" (p. 397). This idea was further explored and reinforced in a case study by Cope (2005) that reviews the use of the “phenomenological interview” as described by Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) and Cope (2005, p. 173).

**Defining Phenomenology**

The phenomenological movement was founded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and serves as the basis for numerous researchers in the field. By using a process called “epoche” to analyze human behavior and group assumptions about human nature, theorists have gained greater understanding of the mannerisms and characteristics of society in general. Using this methodology, phenomenologists gather "capta" or conscious experience, rather than traditional data “to bring out ‘essences’ of experiences
or appearances (phenomena), to describe their underlying ‘reason’ and aims to be less rigid to allow robust opportunities for discovery” (Pivcevic, 2014, p. 11).

Other theorists, such as Desecrates and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), proposed the concept of dualism, and George Wilhelm Fredrick Hegel (1770-1831) also expresses the existence of duality in which he categorizes them as absolute and realizable.

However, Martin Heidegger, a disciple of Husserl, launched a sharp departure to Husserl's philosophy. Whereas Husserl conceived humans as the product of their states of consciousness, Heidegger argued that consciousness is peripheral and his approach to the study of phenomenology focuses on channeling beyond the subjective experience to find the genuine objective nature of things as personally experienced (Natanson, 1973; Safranski, 1998).

Although the use of phenomenological inquiry is a well-established methodology within the social sciences, this form of interpretive research has only recently begun to be used in the entrepreneurship domain (see for example Bouchikhi, 1993; Chell & Pittaway, 1998; Costello, 1996; Hines & Thorpe, 1995; Johannisson, 1995; Rae, 2000; Rae & Carswell, 2000; Steyaert, 1997). As entrepreneurship programs continue to grow within academia and entrepreneurial activity surges nationwide, qualitative methodologies and supporting software will continue to expand to answer questions that only be answered through qualitative methods (Carson & Coviello, 1996, p. 53).

As offered by these theorists, phenomenology as a research methodology provides a unique structure for the exploration of human experience with the goal of gaining deeper understanding of the phenomena as experienced by the individuals (Kafle, 2013). To do so effectively requires very careful attention to extrapolate the genesis of the
phenomenon and produce a relatable concept that represents a complete and holistic picture.

As stated previously, Husserl formed the foundations and philosophy of phenomenology, turning directly to the evidence of lived experience, or the first-person point of view. Husserl also mentions the truth to be either "real" or "natural" as the process by which we all understand everyday phenomena (Jennings, 1986, p. 1233). This theoretical framework begins to create a platform for the objective study of an individual’s unique thoughts and emotions as a result of those events.

Regarding the western approach to phenomenology, Desecrates was the first to propose the concept of a “double existence of truth in the form of body and soul” most commonly referred to as dualism (Skirry, 2006), (Kafle, 2013). The term “phenomena” can also be attributed to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who breaks down the terminology to define phenomena as "real" and noumena as "problematic" (Stang, 2016). Similarly, Georg Wilhelm Fredrick Hegel (1770-1831), describes double forms of experiencing reality as "absolute and realizable" (Horstmann, n.d.).

This study employs the western approach to phenomenological research which is typically separated into three major categories (Kafle, 2013) as follows:

Transcendental Phenomenology - This school of phenomenology is based upon the thought that in order "to reach to the 'core' or 'essence' through a state of pure consciousness," one must suspend personal prejudices through a process referred to as reduction (Kafle, 2013, p. 186). By suspending personal opinions and biases the researcher is able to achieve “a single, essential and descriptive presentation of a phenomenon” (Kafle, 2013, p. 186). Proponents of this phenomenology believe that if
there is more than one reality, it opens opportunities for ambiguity. Although there are theoretical differences on the practice of reduction bracketing and epoche are the terminologies most commonly agreed upon and associated with this process.

Existential Phenomenology – In the twentieth century, the term existentialism was adopted as a label for the work begun by Blaise Pascal (1623–62) who viewed humans as fundamental contradictions between mind and body. Sharing Pascal’s view was Soren Kierkegaard (1813–55), who is considered the founder of modern existentialism and influenced the work of Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre and others. Warthal (2006) grouped these philosophers as "existential phenomenologists" based upon commonalities in methodologies used to understand the phenomena upon which they focus (Kafle, 2013, pp. 187-188). The differentiators that keep existential phenomenology distinct from other schools is the rejection of Husserl's belief of the possibility of complete reduction and a firm focus upon the individual re-achieving a greater consciousness and self-awareness of their everyday experiences.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology – This concept of phenomenology comes from the writings of Martin Heidegger and presents a dramatic departure from transcendental phenomenology. Heidegger argues that suspending personal opinions (reduction) is impossible and as such, focuses on diving deeper into the participant’s experience by analyzing and interpreting their life stories. Later scholars, including Hans George Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and Max van Manen, further refined the philosophocial underpinnings to frame a set of core elements for future applications of this school of thought in the research process. (Kafle, 2013).
**Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research**

To fully comprehend the different perspectives of each educator and the dynamics of the respective learning environments, this study utilizes a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Grounded in phenomenological methodology, hermeneutics brings focus to the lived experiences of the participants. Through the phenomenological interview, the experience of the individual drives the investigative process as the objective is to focus on the subjective view and experience of that individual. Van Manen (1990) refers to this research as "interpreting the texts of life" (hermeneutics), and phenomenology as a “process by which the researcher interprets the meaning of the lived experiences” (Van Manen, 1990, p.4 & p. 26).

Merleau-Ponty (1962) has described phenomenology as a "study of essences" and emphasizes the use of qualitative narrative and the recording of intonations, gestures and facial expressions as research participants describe their life stories (p. vii). Similarly, in Evans (1999) book *The Pedagogic Principal* in which he shares lived experiences of school principals, he emphasizes the need for the researcher to record expressions to capture attitudes and feelings that are difficult to convey through language alone.

Cohen (2001) states that 'hermeneutic phenomenology' is focused upon creating a meaningful interpretation of the phenomenon through intuition and Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) further support that hermeneutic phenomenology is centralized upon the human experience as it is lived. The objective is to highlight nuances of the experience that the participant may consider an irrelevant part of everyday life to achieve clarity and meaning. Most simply, Sharkey (2001) offers that the methodology of
hermeneutic phenomenology stimulates the researcher to thoughtfully consider the deeper underlying meaning of the texts and get lost within them.

To provide some framework for this type data collection, an article by Groenwald (2004) titled, *A Phenomenological Research Design Illustrated*, proposes the following steps: identifying the subjects; establishing the data collection process; a methodology for storing the data; data explication strategies; and validation. Aspers (2004) outlined a similar, seven-step process consisting of first and second order constructs.

In a publication by Jason Cope (2005) he includes a case study outlining how phenomenological inquiry can be used as a methodology specifically in entrepreneurship research in the form of the phenomenological interview as originally described by Thompson et al. (1989). As a form of hermeneutic phenomenological research, the phenomenological interview aids the researcher in understanding and capturing the essence of the lived experience of the interviewee. While it is essential the interviewer explore emerging literature and be knowledgeable in both theory and practice of the subject matter, the interviewer must set aside any presuppositions, and extreme caution must be exercised to avoid assumptions of what "should" be. As applied to Cope's research (2003, 2005), "no specific theories, hypotheses or constructs were developed before engagement with the participants" (Cope, 2005, p. 176).

Based on the work of Cope and other aforementioned researchers of the entrepreneurial discipline, phenomenological interviews were used as the primary research tool to obtain a first-person description of the educators' experience.
Phenomenological Processes

The phenomenological processes used in this study are based upon the work of Moustakas (1994) to understand and derive meaning about the perceptions educators have regarding their strategies and methodologies to bridge experiential and classroom learnings.

The process of epoche’ (or bracketing) is intended to assist the researcher in adopting a fresh view of the phenomenon being explored, free from personal bias to the greatest extent possible, to focus upon the experiences of the participants in the study. While complete disassociation with personal experience is highly unlikely, it is important that the researcher acknowledge their existence.

The focus of my studies within the Master of Business Administration program at the University of Maryland was "strategic and entrepreneurial management." I have also taught as a guest lecturer at Ohio University. As I have experience both as a student of entrepreneurship and an instructor, I have a strong connection to the phenomenological construct of the classroom environment and experiential learning. As outlined in the epoche’ process, journaling my thoughts after each interview throughout the study assisted in capturing my perspectives and biases as an attempt to limit my personal involvement (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 84-90).

In conducting the interviews, the goal was to set the tone for an open dialogue that encouraged the participant to express their experiences in detail. Following this approach, the interview participants in this study were not held to a pre-structured set of questions, rather, received clear direction that the interview was intended to be conversational in nature. Thompson, et al. (1989) stated that "with the exception of an opening question,
the interviewer must have no a priori questions concerning the topic" (p. 138). For example, Cope (2005) informed participants at the beginning of the interview that the focus of the research was on their personal recollections. In this study, the participant spoke of their experiences as they emerged through a natural course of conversation. Everyday terms were used, theoretical language was avoided (Patton, 2002) and questions asked by the interviewer flowed ‘from the course of the dialogue and not from a predetermined path' (Thompson et al. 1989, p. 138).

**Phenomenological Reduction**

Emerging patterns and themes were discovered and identified through the process of bracketing and sorting. According to Van Manen (2014, p. 221), "the reduction is a complex reflective attentiveness that must be practiced for phenomenological understanding to occur." After interviews were conducted, transcribed and coded, key statements were identified that were indicative of the participant’s experience of the phenomenon. This process is referred to as "horizontalization" of the data and served as a process to impart equal value to each aspect of the data (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Key data points were then grouped to identify emerging themes.

**Imaginative Variation**

This process requires that the researcher apply extensive thought, imagination and the use of multiple perspectives to describe the phenomenon as experienced by the subject (Moustakas, 1994). As the process unfolds, "the world disappears, existence no longer is central, anything whatever becomes possible" (Moustakas, 1994, p.98). Free from constraints and pre-conceptions, the researcher can recognize structural and
recurring themes as they emerge from data collected and descriptions derived from
through phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994).

**Synthesis**

To complete the final step of the analyses, a profile was created for each
participant to summarize their experience (Creswell, 2013) and then the summaries were
combined to create a comprehensive, holistic picture of the experiences of all participants
(Moustakas, 1994, p. 144). These narratives provide a snapshot of the lived experiences
of the educators interviewed and their perceptions of the phenomenon.

**Data Collection and Preparation**

Researcher role – The focus of my graduate studies program while pursuing an
MBA at the University of Maryland, was strategic and entrepreneurial management. At
the time, this area of focus was offered at very few colleges and universities. Before,
during and after my degree program I have been employed in the field of real estate and
economic development where I have had the opportunity to engage with seasoned and
successful entrepreneurs as well as those who were just beginning their journey. I
continue to be inspired to this day by these creative, forward-thinking individuals, each
unique and yet similarly driven to succeed. Therefore, before data collection, I practiced
epoche’ (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). As a vital step in the process to ensure that I
was in the best position to connect and relate to the participants' experiences, I prepared a
journal describing my own experiences to obtain a fresh perspective free from biases
(Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Moustakas, 1994), and each individual
participating in the research has described the phenomenon from their various
perspectives (Moustakas, 1994).
According to Patton (2002, p. 14), the researcher is the key instrument in conducting a qualitative research study as she discovers and collects data through observation and interviews. Therefore, I exercised reflexivity to uncover any biases and assumptions to ensure credibility of the qualitative research methodology (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005, p. 201).

**Credibility.** This study employs a transactional approach (Cho & Trent, 2006) to ensure validity. Information collected was analyzed using rigorous methods, and a systematic approach was followed to produce findings of the highest-quality (Patton, 2002). Member checks were conducted with each participant to ensure that the transcribed interview accurately captured statements and meanings (Cho et al., 2006, p. 322). To strengthen credibility of the research process and achieve data transparency, all documents and data created throughout the process of this study will be stored in an archive and shared upon request (Moravcsik, 2014).

**Sample.** Purposeful sampling is a strategy used to compile meaningful data resources by identifying those subjects that would likely have some experience with the phenomenon being studied. Through this process, the sample set can be narrowed to identify those who are likely to provide "issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry" (Patton, 2002, p. 230) to gain the greatest insight and deepest understanding of the phenomenon.

Criterion sampling is a type of purposive sampling and especially useful in cases of exploratory qualitative research in which a small number of subjects will be used in an attempt to explain the phenomenon. Experiential learning was the central phenomenon of this study, particularly regarding how the experience outside the classroom was
incorporated into the curriculum and formal classroom setting. It was expected that all educators in the study had experience with some form of experiential learning, whether directly or indirectly.

As the phenomenological approach is a methodology used to gain a better understanding of the lived experience, it is important to determine a meaningful sample size that assumes to be representative of the greater whole, according to Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Patton, 2002). When using phenomenological inquiry, Polkinghorne (as cited in Patton, 2002), recommends that 5-25 subjects who have experienced the phenomenon participate in in-depth interviews.

For the purposes of this research 13 different educators were chosen from accredited entrepreneurship programs in the United States (See Table 7) that have been ranked as a top undergraduate entrepreneurship program by at least two of the following resources: Fortune Small Business America's Best Colleges for Entrepreneurs (Top 25), The Princeton Review/Entrepreneur Magazine Top 25 Undergraduate Schools for Entrepreneurship and The US News and World Report Entrepreneurship (top ten) Rankings. It is important to note that a limitation of this sample is the criterion used by the aforementioned resources in determining the ranking of these programs.

**Informed consent.** Each interview subject provided consent in accordance with the guidelines and parameters set forth by Ohio University. All ethical issues of research involving human subjects were adhered to including the principles of autonomy, beneficence, and justice.

**Data collection.** Data collection began in Fall 2017. I contacted potential interview subjects to provide an overview of the study, the research methodology and
proposed schedule for completion. Once the candidate agreed to participate, the 13 interview dates were scheduled over an eight-week timeframe.

**Interview process.** Each of the educators participating in the study took part in a one-time, unstructured interview that was recorded then transcribed with the aid of a software transcription program. The transcription was reviewed by the researcher and compared to the field notes compiled. The transcription was then confirmed as accurate with the participant to ensure validity. I also maintained a journal to record my experiences throughout the research process.

**Organization, analysis, and synthesis of data.** Though there is no prescriptive process for conducting hermeneutic phenomenological research, it is agreed that maintaining the highest level of quality throughout the research process and ensuring the integrity of the final product is the most crucial aspect (Kafle, 2011, p. 194).

Once each audio file was transcribed it was saved as a document and the text entered into NVivo. Member checks were done with each of the 13 participants to ensure accuracy and proper interpretation. The software was then used to assist in performing content analysis across all cases as a whole. The purpose of conducting the cross-case comparison in NVivo was to “seek out both what is common and what is particular about the case” (Stake, 2010, p. 238). The final step of the analysis developed theoretical themes and clustered together evidence that confirms the presence of emergent relationships (Hycner, 1985). According to Eisenhardt, "An essential part of theory building is a comparison of emergent concepts, theory, or hypotheses with the extant literature. This involves asking what this is similar to, what does it contradict, and why" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 544).
NVivo Qualitative Software Tool Background

Computer-based qualitative analysis software (CQDAS) was first introduced in the 1980’s as a tool to assist in developing rigor for qualitative research. Lyn Richards, the co-developer of NVivo, states (1999, p.412) that NVivo “is designed for the researchers who wish to display and develop rich data in dynamic documents.” The software tool allows the researcher to build robust data using the information collected through its browsing, coding and annotating capabilities. NVivo can process a broad range of data collected over time to assist qualitative researchers and can be learned while conducting research rather than adding a prolonged preparatory training phase. Serendipitously, I will be learning by doing in the process of researching the premise of learning by doing!

Critics of the software (Welsh, 2002) express concern that as a tool, NVivo distances the researcher from the data and is limited in its analysis as it searches for the frequency of specific keywords but not their synonyms or meanings. Further, Seidel (cited in Welsh, 2002) suggests the software may influence researchers in the deductive process and invite the use of grounded theory. Alternately, Glaser (1998) argues that the software’s use in grounded theory studies encourages the researcher to produce full descriptive coverage rather than grounded theory. Even so, Glaser conceded that he was open to the use of computerization if it could be shown that it was compatible with the tenets of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998).

Conversely, supporters of the software advocate for its use in the qualitative analysis process in that it adds prestige and rigor to the research study and the believability and quality of the analysis. NVivo, as a tool, helps to manage data files, but
it’s the researcher that ultimately makes the decisions for data organization, coding, and analysis (Ozkan, 2004). An in-depth study of qualitative software tools by Soliman and Kan, (2004) concluded that the convenience of NVivo to flexibly store, structure and access raw data was one of the key components that enhanced grounded theory analysis. During the later stages of conceptualization, NVivo was used as a constant reference to the raw data to ensure rigor. However, as the research process moved towards manual analysis, the researchers felt NVivo had limited modeling and graphics tools. Further, in an analysis of (CQDAS) products, Ozkan (2004) concluded that while there are other programs available such as Atlas/ti, Ethnography, and MaxQD, for example, NVivo is highly recommended for qualitative research.

Despite criticisms, NVivo has gained support for use in phenomenological studies. Asensio (2000) states the software was an enabling tool that allowed the processing of broad sets of data and facilitated collaboration and effective management of the data amongst a research team working from multiple locations.

As recommended by Welsh (2002, paragraph 9), “to achieve the best results it is important that researchers do not reify either electronic or manual methods and instead combine the best features of each.” In this manner, the researcher can avoid human error but still apply human intuition as a complement to the technological capabilities of the software.

**Research limitations**

While the methodology as outlined is based on solid theory and practice, there are limitations of this study.
First, the sample of universities to investigate was limited by those identified as top entrepreneurship programs in the United States by the three aforementioned publications. These resources are available through many different channels and are regarded as reputable and reliable sources for ranking college and university programs. However, they each are limited by the aspects and criteria for measurement and do not necessarily provide a scientific approach to a collective determination of the top entrepreneurship programs. By selecting those colleges and universities that were listed in at least two of the resources as the top 25, an attempt was made to narrow the sample to a manageable number. Therefore, opportunity exists to assemble a more comprehensive sample to support future research.

Also in regard to the sample, the solicitation of professors was limited to those whose contact information could be found by searching the respective college or university website. The names were entered randomly onto a spreadsheet, and each was contacted in no special order. Each of the professors was identified as having some experience with entrepreneurship education, however, no further investigation was conducted to ascertain the level to which they had or have interactions with the programs. A more purposeful sample may have been obtained if a pre-survey had been done to identify those professors with specific experiences related to this study.

Another limitation exists with the use of NVivo as described above. While the software is a valuable tool in identifying key themes, it attempts to apply quantitative measures to qualitative data and is most effective when combined with manual review.
Further, the study is limited in regard to phenomenological research methodology as the interviews were not conducted in person or via video, and as such, intonations gestures and facial expressions were not able to be recognized or recorded.

The use of assorted forms of methods and data sources, or triangulation, is a data validation tool used to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 2002). As triangulation merges information from different sources, it provides a qualitative research strategy to test validity. A limitation of this study is the lack of triangulation as the interview was the only source of data collected.
Chapter 4: Organization, Analysis, and Synthesis of the Data

This study proposes to answer the following: How do educators teaching in undergraduate entrepreneurship programs create the environment necessary to bridge the learning that takes place inside and outside the classroom? Do professors teaching in outstanding entrepreneurship programs promote opportunities for reflection within their classroom and curriculum? Even if not explicit, do they engage students in reflective activities that link theory and practice?

Description of Participants

Thirteen participants consisting of 10 men and three women from 11 different universities across the United States (Figure 3) completed the study. All participants met the age requirement of the study, which was eighteen years of age or older.

Figure 3: Geographic location of home universities of the participants

Profiles were developed for each professor to form a compendium that includes the following components for each educator interviewed: 1) biographical information; 2)
a “bubble diagram” that graphically depicts keywords, topics and relevant points of discussion that occurred during the interview process; 3) a summary of references specifically on reflection and reflective practices; and 4) the original transcript with researcher annotations.

Based upon the work of Cope (2005), phenomenological inquiry methodology in the form of interviews was used as the primary research tool to obtain a first-person description of the educators’ experience. There were four levels of analysis used to examine the interview data.

Level 1 Analysis

Level 1 – This step of the analysis involved transcribing the full original audio recording to a document that could then be input into NVivo software. The initial data analysis process began with a familiarity and memory refresh of the interview. Each transcript was reviewed and read multiple times to develop a general sense of the participants’ lived experiences prior to proceeding to content analysis, and researcher notes were added to the transcript to capture insight into each participant’s experience (Patton, 2002). This depiction became part of the profile built for each interviewee to identify key statements and “provide an understanding of how the participant experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 82). Hycner (1985) further describes this exercise as “bracketing and phenomenological reduction.”

Level 2 Analysis

The Level 2 analysis resulted in an individualized case study for each participant (Hartley, 1994) comprised of three major components: 1) A brief biographical narrative of the educator to provide a high-level summary of pertinent background information for
each interview subject; 2) Through the use of NVivo software, a “bubble diagram” was constructed for each interviewee to provide a visual dashboard of key topics and themes identified in the analysis of the transcription. Each bubble represents an aspect of the professor’s teaching practices of the entrepreneurship program discussed in the phenomenological interview. 3) A narrative was compiled to provide the reader a holistic portrayal of the person and the program as it related to each participant’s personal experience. Lastly, each profile contains the original transcript and researcher notes as described in Level 1. The narrative is intended to provide a holistic portrayal of the participant and may be chronological, thematic or both (Cope, 2005).

The methodology for phenomenological inquiry requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the context of the lived experience as relayed by the subject without reference to prior research or literature (Cope, 2005), representing “a crystallization and condensation of what the participant has said, still using as much as possible the literal words of the participant” (Hycner, 1985, p. 282). These condensed case studies provide a mechanism by which this researcher was able to more coherently digest the data to provide a “structured content analysis” across the 13 cases.

**Professor A - synopsis of interview conducted September 8, 2017.**

Professor A’s focus is on global management. He has an international background with specific interest in managerial practices and entrepreneurship in developing communities. He is interested in fostering innovation not only for creating wealth but for social mobility “especially for groups that might not have the connections or contacts.” He has been teaching at Arizona for 12 years, and their center for entrepreneurship is one of the
oldest in the country. He serves as academic director and director of graduate studies and has transitioned from management into a more clinical position.

In discussing the transitions he’s seen in entrepreneurship education, he provided two perspectives. On the one hand, he feels that there is a tendency to allow trends, or “flavor of the decade” to dictate programs and curriculum. On the other hand, he conveyed excitement about how entrepreneurship as pedagogy has expanded in the US - he saw it “flourishing abroad” before coming to the US and feels it’s “blossoming.”

On experiential learning and reflection: Prof. A saw it as critical to business education and stated that “…real projects, going out and doing work and getting hired as real consultants” is key. It’s also important for the students to know that the person teaching them has practical experience. He shared that at the beginning of the semester, students are asking the questions:

Professor, how many businesses have you started? How many businesses do you own? They could care less about how many papers you've published on entrepreneurship and think, "What can you teach me?" Reading the next new textbook and taking quizzes is not going to work.

As part of the program, all seniors are required to take a capstone class in which they are assigned a project with a real company.

He described undergraduate students as being “really good at reading books and taking quizzes” and growing up thinking that if you meet requirement “x,” then you’ll get a good grade. In conclusion, he stated, “If we don't give them exposure to the world beyond a college campus, then we are just creating hamsters in a cage. Eventually, they are going to go out, but they will not be ready.”
Professor B - synopsis of interview conducted September 29, 2017.

Professor B conveyed a strong connection to the Lassonde Center throughout his interview and excitement about what the Center currently provides and what it can become. He was enthusiastic about the new studio space and how that feature is resonating across campus and generating even greater interest in the center. He clearly enjoys the opportunity to engage with students and other faculty members at the center and how it’s created a “social hub” at the corner of campus. But he states what makes the center “magical” is the student engagement opportunities. The donor for whom the center is named is actively present and involved as a true partner in the venture.

Prof. B’s area of focus is organizational behavior. He was dean for ten years before establishing the Lassonde Center and also served as university vice president for seven years, so he’s been able to understand and explore the university not only as a faculty member but a decision maker at the administrative level. This broad-based level of knowledge and experience of university operations is reflected throughout his comments as he speaks about cross-disciplinary opportunities and a wide-range of programs that are engaged at the Lassonde Center. He seems energized by this dynamic and worked first-hand to grow the Center and program. He’s very much invested in the Center and the program and creating a robust experience for the students. In fact, the Center came first, and the degree program was only created approximately five years ago.

On experiential learning and reflection: Regarding reflective practices, Prof. B spoke about the presentation students do as part of the program, but was much more focused on the iterative process that occurs through student engagement at the Center. He referred to the “club-like” atmosphere and the sense of belonging that the students have
due to the strong identity of Lassonde. The association extends beyond the walls of the center through collaborative efforts with other colleges – of particular note is the bio-engineering “Bench-to-Bedside” program he referred to that connects engineering and medical students. The vision of the donor and the university was for the Center to promote opportunities for interdisciplinary studies. Professor B also spoke about engagement with community and business leaders and connecting students through internships programs.

As we concluded the interview, Professor B spoke about the original vision for the Center:

Our idea from the beginning was to have no barriers and no boundaries. Most people put so much control on it (their programs) that it limits success …so our whole engagement piece is within that bigger philosophy of the more kids on the playground, the more fun it is going to be.

Professor C - synopsis of interview conducted September 15, 2017.

Professor C began by speaking about different types of experiential learning he incorporates into his classes. He uses case studies in Entrepreneurial Finance, situational scenarios in teaching social entrepreneurship and one of the first exercises they do is the twenty-dollar challenge in which they are given a fixed amount of time to maximize their capital. They also have another exercise in which they’re given a cardboard box, and they have to make a product. It’s a means by which they learn the process of inventing a product and finishing it. The notion is to get them to think about the process of solving a problem. He explains that “we try to make them (exercises) as real world as possible.”
On experiential learning and reflection: When asked about opportunities for reflection, Professor C indicated that it is very formal. As a Jesuit university, reflection is a common theme, and often reflection papers are a final requirement of the class. He indicated that the students do not receive a grade for this project and he doesn’t have a good grading scheme but would like one. The assessment is very much a personal reflection. He says, “Sometimes I tell people the way you ace this assignment is to write about your distinctive weaknesses and failures. So I tell them they get an “A” if I read it and cry!”

Professor C has been teaching for 15 years and states that the programs have become more experiential and more innovative. There is less reading now and more hands-on projects. He states that his students are very much looking for the experiential component and an opportunity for applied learning, interaction with companies, and co-curricular activities.

Professor D - synopsis of interview conducted September 25, 2017.
Professor D led off the interview by explaining that while he is not an academic, he is a very successful entrepreneur and was approached by the Dean of the business school when the new entrepreneurship program was started at Utah. Through his role on the Advisory Board, he became more engaged with the program as it continued to develop over the last fifteen years. As such, his perspective on practical and applied learning comes very much from a first-hand basis. The first program he started was the new Venture Development Center to create “a student-focused real practical learning experience for an entrepreneur.” He expressed pride in the fact that the program has launched nearly 60 companies out of the university and raised about $200M in capital.
Before his joining the university, there was a very traditional Tech office in place that filed patents. He helped to take a more proactive view that put together marketing and business plans to create companies and raise capital. The students were engaged in the process under his direction, and eventually, the program was funded by a $3M endowment. There is a “loose” syllabus because, he states, “I don't give them any specific format because I found that if they are given exactly what they are supposed to do, (then) they are going to do only what they are supposed to do.”

The year-long program, founded in 2002, is highly interactive with faculty and students meeting regularly to identify problems, develop strategies and implement solutions. Prof. D says of the process, “I try to let the students come to their own conclusion about what should be done, as opposed to imposing my own opinion. They’re educating me as I am educating them.” In asking about how the program has changed since its’ inception, he talked about the increased opportunities to engage with business partners in helping them solve problems. The program has expanded from primarily business school students to include engineering, science, and medical students, as well as some students from the social sciences. Another way that he says it’s changed is that he’s “gotten better at it,” and that the Center has gained credibility and was recently ranked as the “number one university technology commercialization institution by the Milton Institute.”

When asked if, due to his background, he thought he “came at the program differently” than some of his colleagues, he spoke about his focus on the skills that he felt the students needed to learn to be successful entrepreneurs. He spoke about tying together all the components, concepts and theories that the student has learned in class and
applying it practically. Through active learning, the student can grasp “what the market looks like and who will buy it, and what (it should) be price(d) it at.”

On experiential learning and reflection: Regarding reflective practices, Prof. D encourages his students to keep a journal and take opportunities as events occur to stop and make notes. The journal is for self-reflection only, but he states that he would like to bring the students together for that sharing activity. Students do not receive a grade for their journal but are graded on participation based upon on how well the student is prepared when they come to class and how they present themselves.

One learning aspect that Professor D mentioned is that the students find it difficult sometimes to detach themselves, so they don’t become too emotionally invested. The market can be very fickle and students need to learn early on that disappointment is part of the process.

The business plan competition evolved under Professor D’s watch to include a component that allows students to build and test products. The process that they go through – from product development to seeking venture funding is very much in line with what they will experience if they should decide to become an entrepreneur, according to Professor D.

**Professor E - Synopsis of interview conducted September 20, 2017.**

Professor E’s background and training are primarily in music, and he serves as Chair of the Music Department. But his joint appointment with the School of Business came about as a result of the web-based technology he developed that was adopted by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and later became the foundation of a new company. A practicing
musician and entrepreneurial and innovative in his own right, Professor E felt he could share his experiences to help students apply those concepts no matter their field of study.

According to Prof. E:

You can have active learning but if it is out of date if it is not relevant to what the real world is seeking today it is not particularly useful. Experiential is when you (take) what you have learned in an active education environment and apply it in the field. (Students) need to be in an environment where they can fail, and there's no better lesson than failing in a professional context.

Prof. E also claims that experiential education does not necessarily have to be innovative. Sending students out into the field gives them the opportunity for active learning, but they may not necessarily developing new ideas or solutions to problems. However, through co-op programs, students may come back knowing more than the professor about leading-edge technologies, for example. He states:

That is why a lot of people talk about experiential learning, but they don't do it very well. Professors don't want to get out of their comfort zone. They don't want to learn, and the whole idea of just keeping up with new technologies - let alone new methodologies - is very difficult to do. So institutions need to embrace both the practitioners and the academics in an environment. You need to raise theory and practice and create an environment where, not in a class by class basis, but in the institution as a whole, there is mutual respect. A lot of practitioners either feel intimidated or have other preconceptions going in both directions around these people with successes in the field.
Professor E talked with excitement about the innovative process and how some people may have a natural curiosity and creative aptitude, but become disinterested when they need to do a market analysis. He uses “arts-based learning” to help promote free-flowing creative thinking to form ideas and solutions that then get transferred to another member of the team to implement. This allows the creative process to flow without thought of how the project will be funded or marketed. He says, “If someone says ‘Hey I think we can make money with this,’ it creates a different mindset. So I separate entrepreneurship and innovation in that way.”

Professor E went on to talk about “design thinking” and how the opportunity for students in the arts to team with business and science students helps to spur innovation and, he hopes, leads to mutual respect for what each member brings to the team. “Universities have not quite figured out interdisciplinary... the idea that somehow music can be a good training discipline for entrepreneurship is very difficult to clarify. You know, the new MBA is the MFA.”

On experiential learning and reflection: Regarding opportunities for reflection, Prof. E has his students give a final presentation that is reviewed by peers and a panel. Additionally, he’s borrowed an idea he first learned about at the Massachusetts College of Arts. The students create a “process book” to document the life of a concept. Similar to a scrapbook, but, he says:

…it's also something you can use to present somebody your ideas and twists and turns when you sell it but is also a place where you can go to remember where you started. It becomes a tangible narrative of your divergence and convergence and iteration.
Professor E has another creative approach to reflection that he uses in an executive program class titled, “Arts-based learning for management.” Students are required to get into teams and put on a 5-minute play. Thus they are forced into an environment “to become creative, but also collaborate.” Using a book titled, “Notes on Directing,” he’s taken the concept of bringing together seasoned professionals all with their own ideas.

The director who needs to develop this thing from scratch may have a vision or an idea, but he or she has to listen from all of these people... what is the direction, what is the lighting going to be like, what is the costume going to be like what is the music going to be?

So after the show is over, the group reviews a series of comments, similar to Lichtenstein’s Philosophical Investigation. He says:

It’s a series of comments where these guys give their thoughts on what works and does not work while they're trying to direct this piece with all these experienced creatives. And so we have (the students) reflect on these comments and choose five that represent their own experience in their company. I have them reflect on this experience acting in a play and being in a place where everybody has a creative direction, but you only have one that you can put on, on any given night.

**Professor F - synopsis of interview conducted September 15, 2017.**

Professor F has been an instructor in the field of business and entrepreneurship for nearly 30 years at the same institution. He has seen the program emerge from an elective focused on family business to a program that now guides students through the evolution of launching and growing a business and developing exit strategies. This involves pitch
competitions, presentations to the class and clients. The school also has a separate program for social entrepreneurship.

The program has become more interdisciplinary over the years and has a very popular class for non-business majors in which they “do a lot of customization to help the guys in computer science (for example) with specific issues related to starting high tech software companies.” Professor F goes on to say:

I have seen more interest across campus, but it's hard to tell whether that's naturally coming from students or whether our outreach program has made more students aware. But we've even gone so far as to make videos of the students in different colleges and what they've done in entrepreneurship and then they show the videos to students and different colleges to show them how they can connect with our Center and program.

On experiential learning and reflection: They are given assignments that are experiential and are required to “go out and find out themselves how to solve a problem related to the business. They are all project-based entrepreneurship activities that we do for final exams.” He continues with:

Students do not keep a journal. They get feedback on their ideas, and it’s more of an “interactive process where they are looking inside rather than sitting down and reflecting in a project or paper. Now whether I should do that or not? That is a good question. But I haven't tended to do that.

I think people are more aware of entrepreneurship today than they were 30 years ago when I started…my gut feeling is that there are more opportunities out there for them to not only study entrepreneurial ventures but also take part in a
variety of competitions and activities that allow them to actively learn.

The sense I get when I talk to people is that entrepreneurship learning, the learning process, is learned by doing. I don't know if the reflective part is so much part of it, you know they go out and do something, and you get feedback, and it is a reflection process so that could be considered reflection, but by and large, entrepreneurs are not very reflective. They go ‘...well I’ve got to do it if it doesn't work well we'll try it again…’ They just keep plugging away, and maybe a better pedagogy would be to have them do more reflection to identify why it didn't work, and what things may need to be changed and improved. But entrepreneurs don't tend to be that amenable to giving themselves the hard feedback on how they're doing, but if they’re students, they probably should. They have to get a grade. The feedback that they get in my course is mainly from the client that they work with. So that's kind of what I see going on and like I say, I would be sort of surprised if there are other programs today that do things a lot different than me but maybe not and you let me know if they do.

Professor G - synopsis of interview conducted September 27, 2017.

The center for entrepreneurship is located within the business school but open to any student across campus. Professor G has been leading the center for the past three years and works closely with the entrepreneurship faculty to tie in experiential programming with the academic side, based upon three core functions, “…those are student organizations, on-campus student-run businesses, and then programming for the student entrepreneur. We do a lot of different professional development opportunities and learning projects throughout the year in each of those different organizations.”
We have a hatchery, which is a place for that ideation phase for your business to hatch. Essentially it is a co-working space with a lot of technology and resources. We do workshops, our alumni come in and do tours, all types of things like that happen in that space. We have a business accelerator program so once they have already launched their business, maybe they've been through the Hatchery and have launched their business, and they can then be a part of the business accelerator program which is a little more dedicated time. We meet twice a month, and we have some specific programming that we work through for them to accelerate their business that academic a year. We do business plan competitions throughout the year with cash prizes; we have an entrepreneur in Residence program.

On Experiential learning and reflection:

We have two different retail stores on campus, they are at the very edge of Campus facing the Nashville community, and it is open to anybody in Nashville. And these two stores are completely student-run and managed. We have 30 students that work between the two stores so it is about 15 students per store and they handle everything from running the staff meetings to hiring, to managing their teams, to running the inventory, to managing finances, marketing. So it is a lot of sales and running a business, and it is a great way for students get that hands-on experience before they've graduated. Each store has a manager; we really like those to be entrepreneurship majors.

Generally speaking, it is a place to put into practice what you are learning in the classroom, and so you are learning about financial statements, or you are
learning about developing a marketing plan, and now you are putting it into practice.

There are two entrepreneurs from the Nashville community who come and act as mentors and coaches for our students. They have office hours each week, and they are available for any student to meet with them so that it could be problem-solving or working through something specific with one of the accelerator students or it could be a very initial phase with a student from the Hatchery, developing an idea. We also have partnerships with a lot of the local entrepreneurial organizations, because Nashville has a tremendous ecosystem here and we have Partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and The Entrepreneur Center, the Social Enterprise Alliance, a bunch of different organizations. So we periodically bring them on campus or take our students off campus to meet with them and get them connected. Because of our students, I have a wide variety of types of businesses that they are developing so we want to make sure, regardless if it is a coffee shop for some high-tech biotech thing we have resources for them.

Our professors are also very connected in the Nashville community, and so, for example, two of our entrepreneurship faculty serve on the board of the Nashville Entrepreneurship Center downtown, so they are always trying to get students on campus and get them connected. All of our faculty members have been entrepreneurs in the past, and so there is this larger community, we are all kind of working together.
Specifically with your question about feedback and journaling, we have a lot of conversations. We do a lot through social media and email marketing through our website trying to find out with students what is working and what is not, what is lacking and what needs they have and how we can build out programming to serve those needs.

**Professor H - synopsis of interview conducted September 26, 2017.**

Professor H has been teaching for over 25 years and, as best I can tell, a bit of a pioneer when it comes to women professors in the field. She has expanded her original interest in creativity within organizations to understand how organizations can become more entrepreneurial. She related a life-experience working with an executive from DuPont who told her a story of one of their veteran employees. Upon his departure, he was asked why he was leaving the company, and he said, “You paid for my hands for 20 years, and you could have had my head for free, but you never asked.” That quote “struck a nerve,” and she realized that the person was probably speaking for a lot of people in the workforce.

She developed the first course at the University in creativity in business, and there were only a few in the country at that time. One of the components she knew she had to expand was the capacity for experiential learning. She says:

People have to experience it, and they have to tap into their own creativity, and they have to learn how to un-censor themselves. Fortunately a lot more experiential learning (has) come into the business school in the last ten years than before.
Her teaching style is centered on creative problem-solving and design thinking based on the Osborne model of creative problem-solving. The classes are entirely team-based, and students from all colleges can enroll in the program.

On Experiential learning and reflection:

I make the students keep an “idea log.” I check in on those, but I don't grade them. It is a personal account for some people who have never kept a journal. We talk about the kinds of things they want to include and they are amazing to look through.

They also write a reflection paper on a book. There is a book that we use in the course, and they read the book, do teamwork to answer questions, do a presentation, and then they also write an individual reflection paper where they have to share what messages hit them from this book and how they fit into their prior educational experiences. Did it confirm or discount things that you learned before and how does it inform their career journey and what are some takeaways.

Another thing that we do in the course that students enjoy and tell me is one of their highlights is a visit to the Art Institute of Chicago a few blocks away. They are open late one evening when the course meets, and we go over there and form teams. Each team has a unique scenario, and they have a disguised business problem. I say disguised because they are based on real organizations, one might be a bootstrapping financial issue one might be a strategic planning issue one might be a hiring issue, and they have to use art to inform ideas and solutions to problems. And then we come back for a debrief where they show us the art that they used along with some of the highlights of their experience there, and they tell
us the solution that they come up with based on the art. And how the art inspired a question or answer.

When asked how Prof. H came up with this idea she says:

I developed it back in the late 90s or early 2000s. When I was in your shoes writing my dissertation, I often took long walks where I reflected on my findings or my problems, and I still do it today. I have a dog that encourages me to do that. So I am always enjoying getting away from my desk and given that we are lucky enough to be in such proximity to the art museum I thought well let's try this.

When asked if Prof. H felt she was more proactive in promoting reflective practices than her colleagues because she practiced it, she replied,

That is a really great question, it is really good. Here's one thing that I have noticed… it can sometimes help to understand the challenge ahead of time, so everybody has a chance to think about things. There are always people at meetings who are a little more introverted who need to think a little bit more about the issue and would like to process it a little more. And then, of course, there are the extroverts who want to shadow the ideas and talk a little more than others, and I think it can be a difficult thing to balance. Fortunately, we have a great department chair who encourages discussion, and I think I have tried to lead and help people see that there might be a different viewpoint on things. And I don't know if I am always successful and I might be wrong in my viewpoints, so you know just getting people to join the conversation.

One of her most memorable moments was a result of the class trip and exercise at the art museum. She described a situation where a student participated in this exercise
and was transfixed by Monet’s “Wheat stack” series of paintings. He was holding the group up, and when the Professor went to ask how he was doing, he asked, “Is this a real painting, or is it a poster or a graphic?” And suddenly she realized that this student who was close to 30 years old had:

…never in his life been to an art museum to see a real painting. And it occurred to me that with everything that I do in this class with the theory and the cases and whatever I do, here is a moment that the young man had standing in front of something that was affecting him in this way, and it really gave me goosebumps.

I couldn't do my job if I didn't do experiential learning. It is funny because our museum switched their evening hours from Tuesdays to Thursdays and so I had to switch the days I taught the course. I had to.

**Professor I - synopsis of interview conducted September 19, 2017.**

Professor I began by talking about the introduction to entrepreneurship program and the blend of experiential and “in class” learning. The class includes a pitch competition in which the students are vying for an actual $5K grant from the university to launch their idea. He explains:

This is a micro business. And they're going to start it and run it, and they are going to pay the investment back at the end of the school year, it is a one-year class. I can't put them in that position exactly, but at least in this kind of micro-business experiment, I can put them in a position where they are going to have to experience a little of it in a safe environment where they can fail and not have a lot of repercussions.
Recently, a new component was added to the program that allowed the students not only to share in the profits made but also share in the losses of the other teams. This structure created an environment where they were competing but also partnering at the end of the day. A share of the profits are donated to a charity of their choice, so there’s a social entrepreneurship piece incorporated into the program as well. He says:

The entrepreneurial mindset might be something as simple as deciding to take the step forward. That may be the difference between those successful entrepreneurs and the unsuccessful ones. So we kind of overlay that whole experiential course with an understanding of the academic discipline of entrepreneurship. You know case studies, having guest speakers come in, doing things of those types, understanding ideation.

They have a minor in entrepreneurship that is very popular with students in the College of Arts and Sciences, graphic design, and communications. Additionally, they have recently begun a program called “applied creativity and transformation.” He states:

So part of our charge in the next few years is to create a process so that every student at UD goes through a curricular experience in that space in innovation, applied creativity and entrepreneurship. So all eight thousand students. We are trying to create that trans-disciplinary experience.

Professor I talked about the concept of getting the student used to the idea of failure.

You have to get used to the process of - I don't want to say constant failure - but you have to deal with ambiguity and deal with obstacles and understand that it's up to you to keep moving forward. And also to understand that there may come a
time when your idea maybe really isn't that good, and you should listen to others and not pursue what you are doing and move on to something else.

Prof. I spoke about one of the students who had a lead role in managing the student-run venture. “I felt like she had as much experience as somebody graduating would after five years out in the working world.”

On experiential learning and reflection: Every student does a graded reflection paper on the entrepreneurship experience and their first-year experience. And while he admits that the assignment is difficult to grade, he says “... you can tell when a student puts heart into a project, when they really give it some thought. I don't want them to tell me what I want to hear; I want them to give me their thoughts on the discipline and the experience as a whole, those types of things.”

From a reflective process I don't think we do enough, I don't think I do enough in the classroom or the experiential learning parts of our classroom because we have some pretty deep experiential stuff.

I think that the experiential learning outside of the classroom does two things for the students. One, it helps them to sell themselves when they are out there trying to find a job. If they graduate and they have an entrepreneurship degree, it doesn't matter what the discipline is, having that on the resume, having some of those experiences on their resume…at least for me - and I've looked at a lot of resumes over the years - that is always a distinguishing characteristic. I look at where they went to school, I look at their GPA, but what I am really interested in is what you did while you were there. And that typically stimulates conversation in this discussion in an interview.
**Professor J - synopsis of interview conducted September 14, 2017.**

Professor J explained that experiential learning is the basis for the teaching methodology in the entrepreneurship program at Syracuse. The introduction to entrepreneurship class is offered to any student at the entire University – the only prerequisite being that you cannot be a freshman. Last year 849 students took that class, and 80% of those students were not part of the Whitman school. They are non-business students. Similar to other programs, the students are given a very small budget and “…they are going out and starting a company, trying to engage customers, and trying to get to know and pivot and run that business for two weeks.”

Professor J spoke about one of the classes he teaches focused on family business management with a component that is a bit different than other programs I researched. In that class, students are working on an assignment based upon their family business. They may be addressing issues that are related to entrepreneurship, maybe succession planning, conflict and communication, and developing governance and strategy issues. At the end of the semester usually, the parents will come to class, and the students will present to them, or they will join us on Skype.

To further this assignment, Professor J then creates a make-believe scenario whereby the family has asked the student to work in the family business over the winter or spring break, but, before that ask, the student has already committed to a trip. “So they’re thinking about how they would address a realistic and not too far-fetched, but also a very sensitive topic.”
On experiential learning and reflection: “Very little teaching about entrepreneurship is about lecturing, telling students this is how you will become an entrepreneur, but rather have them experience it.”

The capstone class requires students to provide market research for their product in the form of three expert interviews that articulates why those people were chosen and whether or not they supported the product. He says, “So very early on in the process we are making sure our students are getting in front of customers and getting some validations for everything.”

We have them go and find some successful people that could actually act as a mentor to them outside of the classroom, someone that two years in the future they could potentially still have contact with. So, for example, there are a couple of architecture students, and I will encourage them to contact some people who have started an architecture business. Or you have a pre-med student who will say "What is it like to start your practice as a doctor and what are the challenges in that?" So you encourage them to try to find something that is relevant in pertinent to them.

In some classes we have them submit a reflection paper where they talk about lessons learned, and you tried this and how did it work or why do you think it didn't work or didn't meet your expectations. In some classes, they submit those formally for feedback, but it is really hard to give somebody a grade on their reflections.
One of the challenges in general with experiential learning is, “What if somebody tries really hard but fails?” And I don't really have a fair answer for that except that you need to show your math.

Professor K - synopsis of interview conducted October 6, 2017.

Professor K has been teaching as a full-time faculty member for seven years and as an adjunct for over 20 years. He has seen the program morph in that time from being “theoretical to much more experiential.”

One of the activities that Prof. K incorporates into his curriculum is sending the students to the grocery store in teams and requiring them to use design thinking to figure out ways to improve the shopping experience. He also has the students work on consulting projects for regional companies. He says, “I find those to be great, and students like them because they're working on real products and real companies and some of the students find out that is also like any job interview.”

Students in the program are cross-disciplinary, but there is not a real center or hub for entrepreneurial activity. He says, “There are these little pockets of these things, and so I don't know if it is the real hub or not. My observation is that the real entrepreneurial students figure out how to (network) on their own.”

On experiential learning and reflection: The professor’s approach to reflection is very much unstructured and in the moment. He says:

One of the things that I do is call a timeout. I tell them to step out of the depths of this conversation and look at what is actually happening here what is going on. People get wrapped up in the case, and the characters and all of those things and I think sometimes they lose sight of what the real thing we are trying to learn.
(Another) professor has students keep a diary. I thought about doing that, but I haven't gone that far yet. It’s challenging when people are taking a load of five courses, and they're told to do a diary. They look at it more like a pain rather than something beneficial.

I do use forums a fair amount in my courses. I will post questions in the forum, and I require students to respond and then get some conversations going in the forum, and I try to make those questions to be much more reflective in nature. I'm not trying to make them write a personal diary or anything. I am trying to make it reflective from the perspective of...there's the situation they are reading about and how can you get inside the head of that person who we are reading about and how does that match what is inside your head.

Another opportunity for experiential learning involves student teams receiving $1000 to invest in a product or service. They need to develop a business plan, buy inventory and sell real products with the goal of making back the $1000 investment.

**Professor L - Synopsis of interview conducted October 13, 2017.**

The program at Belmont University is a bit different than others in that it is very much driven by experiential learning. Professor L links the philosophy of the programs to the works of Norris in that they promote building connections between things and getting students to a deeper level of learning.

Prof. L also referenced the work of Jeff Stamp and his company “Bold Thinking,” as well as the book *The Joy of Teaching*. Essentially, these exercises help students identify expectations, then help them address the situation when their expectation isn’t
met by taking a creative approach to problem-solving. This process involves reflective learning and self-assessment.

My personal background is actually in psychology; it was my undergraduate degree. So things like networks and a lot of my work has been on cognition and human capital, and for me, the individual level of analysis is home, so I am always thinking about how people are processing and thinking about and trying to understand things.” This is my 13th year at Belmont, and then five years before that working on my Ph.D.

On experiential learning and reflection: Self-reflection is incorporated throughout the curriculum.

In all my classes we have them do a self-assessment at the beginning of the course. At its core, it is a completely reflective exercise, and the interesting part is that for the students that take it seriously it becomes a transformative experience for them. And is not always good.

Professor L has developed a rubric to assess how each student completes the exercises. For example, one of the exercises he uses asks the students to pick a concept covered in class or in a book, find an example of that concept in action, and then reflect on it in an action journal. The rubric requires three different components: 1) did you demonstrate enough reflection; 2) did you demonstrate reflection in context with what other people are saying, and 3) did you demonstrate the concept regarding how you would actually teach somebody else to use it.

I got criticized a lot early on in my teaching for not being clear. Giving them that rubric really forces me to figure out what I want them to demonstrate. It forced
me to organize it, and it forced me to communicate it, and it gives them a
reference tool. It also speeds up the grading process because now you're just
looking and going boom, boom, boom instead of looking for it. It is not about the
answer; it is truly about the reflection and their integration of the ideas and
thoughts.

The program is interdisciplinary, but Prof. L says that there aren’t many students
enrolled outside the business program. The Center is co-curricular and has some student-
run businesses on campus.

Professor L reflected upon his career in the program at the university as he was
the second person hired at the Center. For example:

One of the things that we've seen over the years is curriculum evolution. We've
built in a stakeholder relations course that came out of some of my work on social
capital and developing networks, so we built a course on that. We were the first
social entrepreneurship major in the country.

Professor M - synopsis of interview conducted September 21, 2017.

Professor M has been teaching for three semesters and provided a very fresh perspective
on her experience. The program they offer has a core of four classes, and every first-year
student in the business school is required to take business foundations, business
communications, creative thinking and critical thinking. The creative thinking class that
Prof. M teaches is also the introduction to the entrepreneurship program and the students’
first exposure to experiential learning within the curriculum.

The first thing I think of when I think of experiential learning, even more so than
the things we have them do in class, is to get them moving and moving around.
The biggest thing we do is operate this class just like an entrepreneurial environment. And this is to kind of jolt them out of high school complacency.

As part of the program, all students complete an “HDBI.” (NOTE: The Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) is a system to measure and describe thinking preferences in people. It was developed by William "Ned" Herrmann it is a type of cognitive style measurement and model, and often compared to psychological assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator,[1][2] Learning Orientation Questionnaire,[3] DISC assessment,[4] and others.[5] (Wikipedia).) This helps each student understand more about how they process and learn, and the professor uses these indicators to build “whole brain teams.”

As a result of teaching a freshman class, Prof. M sees first-hand some of the struggles students experience in the passage from high school to college. She reinforced a theme heard in several interviews about students’ aversion to ambiguity.

Students, again, don't like ambiguity because they are used to very strict rubrics that tell them not only how to do it, but exactly what to do to get an “A.” So we are trying to introduce them to the fact that in business, and in the real world, problems are not cut dry, they do not have one answer and they are often more complicated than you would prefer.

One of the exercises, Professor M explains, is:

…a project that advances their creative growth outside of class and demonstrates their understanding and application of the creative process which she has defined as clarifying, ideating, developing and implementing. We used design principles.
And they just hate this prompt; they are just like what project. What do you mean by advance my creative growth?

On experiential learning and reflection:

We tried to look at classes as half activity-based versus half lecture. So in our classes, there is a lot of brainstorming, and there is a lot of getting up and moving around in solving business problems within the class and deciding whether we are going to teach the content before we have them do that or teach it there.

They still want someone with them every step of the way saying yes this is good make these specific changes and then move on and we just really loosen the grip on that and try to raise them to be confident workers. It is a struggle.

Students complete a “process book,” and it can turn into anything in any medium they choose. “It is not a work of creativity as much as a workbook of their work and everything they did.” In the past, students also turned in an individual portfolio, but she found that “the students are very well-versed and telling you what you want to hear.

She goes on to say, “I am a writer by trade, so I understand the importance of journaling, but it can be tricky in a classroom setting. She explained one exercise she has developed as follows:

I have them write letters to future students that I would hand out at the start of the class next semester. And I really did enjoy reading those. And looking back were they being truly honest, no. Because they were all very nice letters and they had to put their names on the bottom of them. But you know who it helped, was the next semester students. I handed those out after the first class, and some of those
students kept those letters with them. And in some cases, they actually went to seek out those people who wrote the letters so they could talk to them. That was neat. I might bring that back next next semester.

In summary, the 13 interviews provide a personal account of each professor’s lived experience and careful attention was given throughout the process of data analysis to highlight meaningful statements and quotes within the original transcript by “line-by-line” coding (e.g., Charmaz, 2014). These statements or “invariant constituents” (Moustakas, 1994) are summarized through NVivo in Table 3 titled, “Common, Emerging and Unique Topics.” This table has been further broken down to isolate the invariant constituents into three main areas: 1) Active and experiential learning activities/alternative teaching approach; 2) Details of specific practices; and 3) Links between theory and practice.

Level 3 Analysis

Level 3 analysis sought to identify those aspects that are common, emerging and unique across all cases by performing a cross-case comparison (Stake, 2010: p. 238; Hartley, 2004). With the aid of NVivo, reduction and elimination of the data allowed me to identify the universal phenomenological themes for all interviews (Hycner, 1985) as shown in Table 3 “Common, Emerging and Unique Topics” and correlate with the in-depth analysis as described in Level 1 and Level 2. Patton (2002) describes this process as “content analysis” in which the researcher “identifies coherent and meaningful examples, themes and patterns in the data, as well as related quotations or observations that illustrate consistency of a specific idea, issue, or concept” (Patton, 2002, p. 149; Cope, 2005).
Level 4 Analysis

Level 4 has two parts. The first involves ‘clustering’ together or synthesizing evidence that confirms emergent relationships (Hycner, 1985). This step is critical in identifying theoretical themes that contribute to a deeper understanding of entrepreneurial learning and development (Cope, 2005). To remain true to the phenomenological methodology and broader development of future theory, theoretical literature was not referenced at this point to illustrate relevance through the data alone. The second and final piece of this step as described by Eisenhardt (1989, p. 544) is to compare “emergent concepts, theory or hypotheses with extant literature” to develop ‘enfolding literature’ that may potentially contribute to future theory building with “stronger credibility and deeper conceptual insight” (Cope, 2005). This portion of Level 4 will be completed in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Composite Thematic Depiction. As a first step to identifying themes, the following chart (Figure 4) titled, “Distribution of Topics Discussed by Participants” was developed through the use of NVivo software and further corroborated by manual review of the researcher, to depict the spectrum of topics discussed with each participant. Keywords are assigned a color, and the more often the keyword is used, the larger the color block on the graph. By example, “experiential learning” was discussed numerous times by each participant and thus a heavy block exists for each, while “field trip” was only mentioned once by Professor H and thus only shows a slim line in that educator’s bar.

The breadth and depth of topics covered during these interviews are further supported by the annotated transcripts and profiles created for each participant.
Interviews ranged in length of time from 40-75 minutes. As a premise of phenomenological inquiry, the participant is the driver of the conversation, and structured interview questions were not used to guide the conversation. Rather, the dialogue was free-flowing with the research interjecting to carry the conversation and encourage and facilitate the participant’s sharing of their lived experience. Without a prescribed set of questions, each interview varied greatly based on the participant’s level of engagement.
Figure 4: Distribution of Topics Discussed by Participants
With the full spectrum of topics developed and the profiles for each participant created, Table 3 was built to illustrate common, occasional and unique topics across the entire sample. Through the transcription process, NVivo identified three parent nodes to categorize the various topics within each, and these groupings were further corroborated by manual review of the researcher. The range of topics, as illustrated in Figure 4 cover many different aspects of teaching within the entrepreneurship curriculum.

Table 3: Common, Emerging and Unique Topics – Common

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th># of cases that reference the topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td>8 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>4 - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>3 - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent node</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Aggregate number of items coded</th>
<th>Percent of Cases that Covered Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Interact with professionals in the field</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Cross-disciplinary (multiple majors in the classes or programs)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Business creation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Formal presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Client and customer interviews</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Interactions and partnership with outside company</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Real business</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Business plan method or business model in class</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Industry and field research</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Funding opportunities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Other competition</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Product development</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: *Common, Emerging and Unique Topics – Emerging*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th># of cases that reference the topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td>8 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>4 - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>3 - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details of specific practices | Individual | 7 | 54% |
Details of specific practices | Major available | 7 | 54% |
Convey link between theory and practice | Journal or process book | 6 | 46% |
Convey link between theory and practice | Reflective group discussion | 6 | 46% |
Details of specific practices | Application process | 6 | 46% |
Details of specific practices | Venture development program | 6 | 46% |
Active and experiential learning activities | Alternative teaching approach | 6 | 46% |
Active and experiential learning activities | Mentorship | 5 | 38% |
Convey link between theory and practice | Reflection paper | 5 | 38% |
Details of specific practices | Business plan competition | 5 | 38% |
Details of specific practices | Prototype development | 5 | 38% |
Active and experiential learning activities | Case study | 4 | 31% |
Active and experiential learning activities | Essay | 4 | 31% |
Active and experiential learning activities | Lecture | 4 | 31% |
Convey link between theory and practice | Active unstructured reflection | 4 | 31% |
Details of specific practices | Cash prizes | 4 | 31% |
Details of specific practices | Entrepreneurship building | 4 | 31% |
Details of specific practices | Mentorship program | 4 | 31% |
Table 3: *Common, Emerging and Unique Topics - Unique*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th># of cases that reference the topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td>8 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>4 - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>3 - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity and specific practices</th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Creative problem solving</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Student run campus 'businesses'</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey link between theory and practice</td>
<td>Group exercise</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Design thinking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Elevator pitch competition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Minor available</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>New venture competition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Pre-picked teams</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Unexpected learning outcomes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and experiential learning activities</td>
<td>Student organizations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey link between theory and practice</td>
<td>Process rubric</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey link between theory and practice</td>
<td>Online forum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey link between theory and practice</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Business school students only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Field trip</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of specific practices</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first section lists topics that were common in no less than 8 of the 13 interviews or just over 60%. In general, the activities and practices listed in this section are common not only to entrepreneurship programs but business and other academic programs as well. However, some variations began to develop regarding how the activity was designed. For example, formal presentations may or may not include a written report and may involve participants external to the class or university.

The second section of the table identifies those topics that are referred to as “occasional,” meaning that between 30-60% of the participants referred to it during the interview. These topics begin to illustrate specific activities related to the parent node, for example, nearly half of the participants’ reference use of a “process book” or “journal” as part of their classroom activities. It is also within this section that we begin to see references to reflective practices in the form of a group discussion or a written assignment.

The third and last section of the chart illustrates those topics that are unique in that they were referred to by less than 25% of the participants. As an example, the “presentation” topic listed is described by Professor B as a combination of two exercises: “I think a lot of it’s reflective because the reflective element is so strong, every class ends with a presentation with what you have done and how it worked out, and there is group reflection all included within the presentation.”

The next step in analyzing the data was to continue narrowing the focus from the three different nodes of 1) Active and Experiential Learning Activities; 2) Specific Practices, and 3) Links between Theory and Practice to reorganize the topics within the given node to begin to establish general themes across the group.
As illustrated in Table 4, each of the 13 participants spoke about experiential learning numerous times throughout the interview. Also referenced by more than 50% of the participants were the learning activities of business creation, business plan or business model development, competitions, and field research. Unique to this node were the topics of “unexpected learning outcomes” and “student organizations” as follows:

Professor H – Unexpected learning outcomes: “…and it occurred to me that with the theory and the cases and whatever I do in this class, here is a moment that the young man had standing in front of something that was affecting him in this way, and it really gave me goosebumps. Wow, this is not something that I would put as a teaching
objective for this course, the ability to see real art, but it occurs to me that sometimes the most profound learning comes in unexpected ways and in unexpected moments. That is one advantage of getting out of the classroom; people will have experiences that they wouldn't expect.”

Professor G – Student organizations: “…being part of a student organization is a great way to build camaraderie and get students working together throughout the entire year. Our main entrepreneurship organizations are DECA, ENACTUS, and Sigma Nu Tau. I can give you more detail but the main point is that students can join that at the very beginning of the school year, and meet with that organization throughout the school year, and there are competitions in May or April, and we do a lot of different professional development opportunities and learning projects throughout the year in each of those different organizations. They all have faculty advisers and are very connected with different faculty members, so they are able to essentially run the organization. There are students who take on roles such as treasurer or president or things like that, but there are faculty advisers that teach them, but they are not specifically connected to a specific course. Anything that they are doing is not for a grade or for credit or anything like that.”
Table 5: *Experiential Learning Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of specific practices</th>
<th>Total Number of Cases that Covered Topic</th>
<th>Total Number of Topic References in All Cases</th>
<th>Percent of Cases that Covered Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact with professionals in the field</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-disciplinary (multiple majors in the classes or programs)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client and customer interviews</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactions and partnership with outside company</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real business</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding opportunities</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other competition</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product development</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major available</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application process</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venture development program</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business plan competition</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prototype development</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash prizes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship building</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship program</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design thinking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevator pitch competition</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor available</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New venture competition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-picked teams</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business school students only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuing to explore the nodes, I reviewed examples of specific practices that were referred to in the interview. There were no specific practices common to the entire group. More than 50% of the participants indicated they incorporated the following practices into the curriculum: interact with professionals in the field, cross-disciplinary (multiple majors in the classes or programs), formal presentation, client and customer interviews, grading, interactions and partnership with outside company, real business, teams, funding opportunities, other competition, product development, individual and major available.

The final node identifies examples of how practitioners establish a link between theory and practice. In this node, the fewest number of commonalities are found.

Table 6 - Links Between Theory and Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convey link between theory and practice</th>
<th>Total Number of Cases that Covered Topic</th>
<th>Total Number of Topic References in All Cases</th>
<th>Percent of Cases that Covered Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal or process book</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective group discussion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection paper</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active unstructured reflection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group exercise</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process rubric</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online forum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection presentation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As provided in the Level 2 analysis and case study description, in my interview process with each subject, I sought to uncover what reflective activities and practices were being used to encourage reflective iterative thought. Through the use of NVivo software, I constructed the following charts and diagrams to depict the spectrum of
reflective practices, the degree to which each was being used collectively, and analyzed the data to illustrate both common and unique features.

**Reflective Practices.** The following charts have been generated through NVivo to specifically explore reflective practices that are used by individuals and the group within the curriculum. *Figure 5* below shows the spectrum from Professors A-M on the different types of assignments and activities they incorporate to support and promote reflection.

![Figure 5: Spectrum of Reflective Practices](image)

As shown in *Figure 6* below, the number of references (quantity) and the depth of reflective practices vary greatly amongst the group. For example, Professor A makes no reference to reflective practices or activities taking place, but Professor H, Professor K, and Professor L all discuss four different types of activities.
When the data was sorted by responses from those participants who held undergraduate business degrees compared to those who didn’t in the chart below, we see a broader range of practices being used. Business degree holder referenced five types, while non-business degree holders reference seven different types with greater frequency.

**Figure 6: Distribution of Reflective Practices Discussed by Participants**

**Figure 7: Comparison of Distribution of Reflective Practices Discussed by Participants with an Undergraduate Business Degree and Participants with a Non-Business Undergraduate Degree.**
To provide further context to this data, Table 7 as follows was developed to incorporate information from each professor profile. While none of the participants were specifically asked to identify gender, the profiles, background research, and references made within the interview have led to the following assumptions regarding gender and educational background for use within the tables above:
### Table 7 - Participant Background Summary of Reflective Practice Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Traditional (T) vs. Non-Traditional (N) Background</th>
<th># of Different Reflective Practices</th>
<th># of Unique Reflective Practice Activities</th>
<th>Participant Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof A</td>
<td>M T</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Business Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof B</td>
<td>M T</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof C</td>
<td>M N</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Industrial Engineering &amp; Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof D</td>
<td>M N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Political Science &amp; Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof E</td>
<td>M N</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Music Composition, Philosophy, Business Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof F</td>
<td>M N</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Organizational Behavior &amp; Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof G</td>
<td>F T</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>International Business, Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof H</td>
<td>F N</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>English, Education, Organization Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof I</td>
<td>M T</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business Admin &amp; Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof J</td>
<td>M T</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Business Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof K</td>
<td>M T</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business Admin &amp; Mechanical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof L</td>
<td>M N</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Psychology &amp; Business Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof M</td>
<td>F N</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalism and History</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Traditional = 6  
Average = 19 activities

Total Non-Traditional = 7  
Average = 22.7 or 23 activities

Highest number of activities = Professor L (Non-traditional)

Highest number of unique activities = Professor L (Non-traditional)
Chapter 5: Summary, Outcomes and Implications

Summary

The process for this study was first to identify educators currently engaged in entrepreneurship education programs across the United States, identify experiential learning activities and opportunities within those programs and determine if and what reflective practices were embedded within the curriculum. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to develop a deeper understanding of how practitioners in the field of entrepreneurship education bridge the learning that takes place inside and outside of the classroom. This research attempted to answer the central research question: What are the experiences of educators in implementing experiential learning pedagogies and how is reflective practice embedded into those? And more broadly the following questions:

1) How do educators in nationally recognized entrepreneurship programs approach developing and incorporating active and experiential learning into their curriculum?

2) How do these educators engage students in activities that link theory and practice and stimulate personal reflection?

3) Do these educators regularly practice self-reflection? And if so, is this the result of having participated in experiential learning programs in the course of their academic studies?

4) How do these educators provide a setting for each participant to identify individual interest in a creative manner?
5) In what ways do these educators feel experiential learning activities have an impact on developing students’ creative problem-solving skills?

According to Moustakas (1994, p. 52), the final step for the researcher in the heuristic presentation is to develop a “creative synthesis that captures the essences, themes and essential meanings of the phenomenon.” As I have been immersed in the data over the course of time, I am able to “infuse the work with a personal, professional and literary value (Moustakas, 1994, p. 52).

The objective of this phenomenological study is to better understand the collected lived experiences of individuals around a phenomenon, rather than focusing on the life of one person (Anderson & Spencer, 2002). Data was gathered in the form of interviews with selected individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. I then analyzed and reduced the data to ultimately develop a comprehensive summary to illustrate commonalities amongst the participants with the phenomenon – the essence of the experience (Creswell, 2013).

The theoretical framework for this study is based largely on the belief that learning includes a socio-cultural aspect in that it must be a part of everyday life and not confined solely to a classroom or educational context. Both Dewey (1910; 1916) and Bourdieu and Nice (2014) argued this point and also highlighted the role of reflection in learning. More recent studies focused specifically on entrepreneurship education and learning have reinforced the importance of discovering, doing and reflecting (Gibb, 2002) but further research is warranted to understand how experiential and active learning facilitates learning for entrepreneurs to more fully explore how they “take forward” their personal learning (Cope, 2005).
As the pedagogy continues to evolve, practitioners and developers of entrepreneurship curricula have expressed a need to more clearly define learning outcomes to address programmatic shortcomings and the needs of students. The National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) employs a framework, developed by Professor Allan Gibb that outlines a typology based on four different types of entrepreneurship education (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012). Although several works have been authored on the typology of entrepreneurship education, these forms generally are considered to be: “About,” “For,” “Through,” and “Embedded” or “in” (Gibb, 2002; Handscombe, Rodriguez-Falcon, & Patterson, 2008; Pittaway, 2009; and Pittaway & Cope, 2007). This framework is particularly helpful in developing focus on the curriculum and assessing learning outcomes.

This study is centered on the lived experiences of educators facilitating experiential learning opportunities and, in relation to the Gibb model, links to two aspects of the “Through” form of entrepreneurship education. Students who participate in experiential learning are able to essentially navigate in the world of the entrepreneur and develop an understanding of the relationships that they will need to develop in order to build the network and support system necessary for success. The professor profiles within the context of this study provide a collection of lived experiences of educators in the field describing ways in which they facilitate real-life experiences for students and opportunities to build key relationships. While research shows entrepreneurship education practices continue to rely most heavily on imparting basic business knowledge (“About”), students must engage in real-life projects or activities to simulate the real-life experience of entrepreneurs (“Through”) (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012).
Outcomes

This study was conducted utilizing phenomenological inquiry as a methodology as outlined by Cope (2005) and informed by the van Kaam method of phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). After reviewing the data utilizing both NVivo and personal, in-depth analysis, the following themes have been identified as outcomes of the study. To provide a comprehensive analysis, the findings are compared to the literature and founding theory as presented in Chapter 2.

Incorporating Experiential Learning into the Entrepreneurship Curriculum

Theme 1 - active and experiential learning activities. Learning by doing is a well-established theory supported by decades of work from Devins and Gold (2000); Gibb (1997); and Polyani (1967) and countless others who have concluded that active and experiential learning is an important component of the curriculum that enhances entrepreneurial learning and is a key factor in the educational development of entrepreneurs. As the findings of this study show, all of the participants indicated that experiential learning was a critical component of the curricula.

Theory supports the concept that successful entrepreneurs possess the ability to develop strategies and harness resources to leverage their position and competitive advantage. For example, Professor A states, “…real projects, going out and doing work and getting hired as a real consultant is key.” To gain these strategic skills, Høning (2004) advocated for incorporating “hands-on” activities into pedagogical techniques. The importance of active learning is the concept that these future entrepreneurs will retain the learnings from their participation experience, test them in real-world situations and continue to learn as they do (Smilor, 1997). As entrepreneurs pursue their field of
interest and learn through experimentation, they become more competent and self-assured and better able to tackle unforeseen circumstances with confidence (Harvey & Evans, 1995). As the results show, while each of the participants employed some active and experiential learning activities the number and type of activities offered varied greatly. For example in reviewing the professor profiles, the scatter diagram data provides a clear illustration of the types of activities each professor reported. The number of activities ranges from nine (Professor A) to twenty-seven (Professor L). (See Table 7).

Research participants corroborated the findings of Wurdinger et al. (2010) and Cornell and Clark (1999). Designing curriculum that supports active learning takes time to develop. Due to the effort required to structure those activities and embed them within the curriculum, instructors are hesitant to make changes or incorporate new activities. For example, Professor E made a very telling comment:

Professors don’t want to get out of their comfort zone. They don’t want to learn and the whole idea of just keeping up with new technologies – let alone methodologies – is very difficult to do. That is why a lot of people talk about experiential learning, but they don’t do it very well.

While Kolb’s model (1984) illustrates how experiential learning takes place, this study reveals a variety of activities that could be incorporated to activate the model. Notably, when reviewing the scatter diagrams, those seven educators who came from non-traditional (or non-business centered) backgrounds illustrate a greater number of active practices than those from a traditional business background.

There was a common theme amongst participants that their students would not be as interested in the program if it did not contain an experiential component (Professor C).
Even if this was a very basic form of field work that required students to solve a real-life problem (Professor F) or more formally structured in a Center or, as Professor G describes, a “hatchery” and accelerator program. This finding supports the work of Carland and Carland (1997) where they identify many entrepreneurship students as “accommodation learners” who experience greater learning success with experiential learning concepts.

**Theme 2 - specific practices.** Several professors commented on the learning style of students, particularly first-year undergraduate students. In general, students disliked the ambiguity of open-ended assignments (Professor A) and would rather have a structured assignment where clear parameters were given. At this point in their educational careers, getting a good grade has been their primary focus, and they would much prefer to be given explicit direction on what they need to do in order to earn an “A” and then do it. However, research shows that those entrepreneurship students who gain self-awareness of their management style and become adept at reacting to unpredictability will be more effective and successful in future endeavors (Glaser, Chi & Farr, 2016).

Roberts (2002) has advocated for the importance of experiential methodologies to facilitate social interaction, yet few of this study’s participants referred to the development of social skills and networking. While reference was made to working in teams within the context of the program, the discussion regarding social engagement as a component of the learning experience was not a main point. Those educators at universities with established centers (Professor B, Professor D) spoke of a strong sense of identity with the center and the increased opportunities for cross-collaboration between
students and between students and faculty of differing disciplines. Professor F discussed the outreach activities based at their center that promote collaboration across colleges for both faculty and students. Other social activities were structured networking events (Professor C) start-up weekends and workshops, and other social activities through student groups and student-run businesses.

Several of the activities support the theory of inquiry-based learning and the research of Igo, Moore, Ramsey, and Ricketts (2008). Partnerships with outside companies, product development, venture development and creating a new business all allow learners to determine their own problems to solve or questions to answer.

**Cultivating Reflective Practices within the Entrepreneurship Curriculum**

**Theme 3 - links between theory and practice.** Dewey argued that people’s actions are influenced by their previous actions, and the outcome can work as a regulating mechanism of future actions (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016). As experience shapes people’s attitudes, behaviors and actions (Hickman, 2007) it is reflection on those experiences and the ability to apply associational thinking in everyday life that has the potential to affect personal transformation and growth. This concept manifests itself in entrepreneurial development when reflective practices are employed to more deeply understand and learn from one experience before moving to the next (Pepin, 2012). Particularly with regard to entrepreneurship education, this suggests that educators may offer students a more holistic education by marrying experiential learning opportunities with the opportunity to reflect upon those experiences for further entrepreneurial development (Pepin, 2012). To support these theories, Professor F offered the
perspective, “I think reflection is an interactive process where they are looking inside rather than sitting down and reflecting in a project or paper.”

Conversely, as evidenced by the data gathered, the most popular activity practiced to chronicle life events is an idea log, journal or process book. Nearly half of the participants indicated they incorporated this activity into their curriculum ranging from a type of “diary or scrapbook” (Professor E) to something more formal such as a reflection paper. Arguably, this activity has merit based on the theories of Vygotsky (1986) and Hubbs and Brand (2005) as applied to the impact of journals in transformative learning and facilitating the iterative process. Further studies indicate that entrepreneurs who are effective learners and disciplined at reflecting upon critical experiences are more competent, strategic, (Cope, 2005) and better prepared for future actions (Gibb, 1997).

If entrepreneurs acquire knowledge through learning by experience (Lindh & Thorgren, 2016) and entrepreneurship is iterative, then reflection is a key component, and experiential learning within entrepreneurship programs can link theory to practice and vision to action through reflection (Johannisson, 1991). Students’ ability to continuously reflect upon their own learning (Argyris & Schon, 1997) is described as central to the entrepreneurial process (Cope, 2003). The literature suggests that continuous reflection by students during and after the learning experience helps them to understand their own learning needs and to make sense of, and evaluate both the meaning and use of both prior learning and new learning needs (Mueller & Anderson, 2014).

Based on this study, however, there seems to be little consistency in how and if reflection is incorporated into the curriculum. Further, how the assignments are graded also varies significantly from no grade (Professor C) to a fully developed rubric
Incorporating periods of reflection into the curriculum allows the learner to introduce and retain information into their working memory (Sweller, 2004). So while the importance of reflection is substantiated, consensus is lacking on what constitutes reflection, and what effects reflection might have on teachers’ practices and students’ learning (Rodgers, 2002).

The data collected indicates that less than 50% of the participants referred to activities that promote iterative thought as a means to establish a link between theory and practice. In contrast, the findings of Molander (1996, in Landström 2010) indicate that those students who can constructively review their actions through self-reflection and feedback solicited from faculty and team members will be better entrepreneurs. The ability to adopt an “external” perspective of one's actions and modify behavior is indicative of a mature level of self-awareness that instills confidence and shows leadership. Results from this study as illustrated in Tables 5, 6 and 7, and Figure 5 show a wide range in the spectrum of both reflective practices and activities employed by these practitioners.

**Implications**

**Practice implications.** Entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as an influential igniter of economic activity and growth. The results of this study indicate that more work can be done to understand how to build a robust curriculum that links theory and practice in an environment where students are encouraged to experiment, supported when they fail, and mentored to reflect upon those learnings to be better prepared for their next venture.
Experiential learning has evolved over time and research has supported the benefits of how the activity promotes linkages between theory and practice. Data collected in this study demonstrates support for incorporating experiential learning opportunities within the curriculum but varies greatly in terms of the offerings and level of engagement students have with active entrepreneurs and external experts in the field. Fostering connections and enabling students to actively “operate in social communities of practice” (Hamilton, 2011; Cope, 2005) adds an important social dimension to the learning experience.

Based upon the results of this study as well as many of those referenced within, I would encourage educators within the field of entrepreneurship to recognize not only the impact of experiential learning, but also the importance of incorporating reflective practices into the curriculum. While limited research currently exists, the evidence strongly suggests that reflection is essential to the iterative process (Johannisson, 1991). Considering that entrepreneurship is very much about creating, discovering, evaluating and exploiting the not-yet-known, (Shane, 2003, p.4-5), it is necessary for educators to assess the role reflective practices may play in molding students’ perceptions of the cycle of entrepreneurship.

In considering how reflective practices may be used, it is also fundamental to develop criteria for assessing those activities and measuring learning outcomes. Pittaway and Edwards (2012) determined that,

Students’ self-assessment through reflective assessment practice was found to be much lower than might have been expected, and data collected supported the fact that the majority of entrepreneurship education focused on helping students
understand the phenomenon rather than preparing them for genuine entrepreneurial activity. In this regard, there seems to be much more scope for the greater use of reflective assessment practices” (p. 793-4).

A goal of this study was to understand if and how reflective practices were being used by the participants. The data collected suggests that much more can be done to foster students’ perceptions of opportunities for self-development (Shane, 2003) and challenge why and how things are done (Kirzner, 1999) through a more purposeful embedding of reflective practices within the curriculum. Through that process, students may develop a more robust understanding of themselves, who they want to be, and how they might shape their own future (Bourdieu & Nice, 2014).

Another area for improvement is the establishment of inter-disciplinary entrepreneurship opportunities for both faculty and students. For example, Professor E states, “Universities have not quite figured out interdisciplinary…the idea that somehow music can be a good training discipline for entrepreneurship is very difficult to clarify.” Generally speaking, the lack of inter-disciplinary opportunities is a systemic issue within the university environment and not unique to entrepreneurship education. Promoting incentive structures that support interdisciplinary activities and creating an environment for mutual respect across disciplines is key, and it starts with the professors. In the scope of this study, a comparison was made to distinguish the number of different practices incorporated into the curriculum by professors from traditional business versus non-traditional backgrounds (Figure 7). Overall, the average for traditional professors was 19, while the average for non-traditional professors was 23. As an educator with a non-traditional background, Professor D, for example, states “coming at the program
differently than some of my colleagues,” due to his entrepreneurial experience. His focus is on the skills students’ need to learn “in order to be successful entrepreneurs and tying together all the components, concepts and theories that the student has learned in class and applying it practically through active learning.”

Lastly, the findings of this study suggest that educators have untapped opportunities to incorporate creative approaches to designing active learning exercises. For example, the publication *Inspiring Active Learning: A Handbook for Teachers* (Harmin, 1994) was referenced by one of the participants as a practical guide to promoting a holistic approach to teaching by adopting active-learning strategies that increase student motivation and self-confidence (Wurdinger et al., 2009). Also, according to Pittaway and Edwards (2012), “More innovative forms of entrepreneurship education remain somewhat peripheral, and the more traditional forms continue to dominate.” One of the most creative approaches to active learning was provided by Professor H in the form of a field trip to a museum. She challenges the students by giving them a problem to solve and then encourages them to use the art around them to inspire creative solutions. An unexpected outcome of this activity was that one of her students had never been to a museum to see a real painting and therefore gained a whole different level of learning and appreciation outside the arena of entrepreneurship.

In summary, this study contributes to enfolding literature in the field of entrepreneurship education by identifying experiential learning designs within the curricula and the use of reflective practices. As educators continue to build new courses and programs, these aspects should be considered to help students fully develop the skill sets and the confidence needed to launch their own ventures.
**Policy implications.** There are three hierarchies to entrepreneurship policy that can be viewed at a micro, meso and macro level. At the micro level, entrepreneurship policy focuses on stimulating new business creation, building and enhancing entrepreneurial skills, and making resources available to support the development of new ideas. At the meso level, it includes streamlining permitting and application processes, deregulation of import and export laws, and incentives to promote and support entrepreneurship in targeted business areas. Entrepreneurship policies at the macro level focus on creating the entrepreneurship ecosystem and developing regulation. On a national perspective, identifying links between entrepreneurship education and economic and social policy objectives is critical in establishing a national strategy (Verheul, Stel & Thurik, 2006), (Mirzanti, Simatupang & Larso, 2015).

At the micro level as defined above, entrepreneurship education and development of skills is a key component in the entrepreneurial policy framework. Specific to the scope of this research, implications to three key policy areas for consideration by college and university administration and their governing bodies are identified as follows:

**Curriculum Development.**

- The results showed both theoretical and practical evidence to uphold the importance of physical space for collaboration. Colleges and universities need to allocate budgetary resources to fund the establishment of this type of environment to encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and create a sense of affinity within the entrepreneurship program. While establishing these centers may not have a direct impact on curriculum development,
they provide a strong base of support for academic and social programming.

- Facilitate cross-disciplinary programs by engaging professors in strategy-focused discussions to create connections between related research activities. Providing incentives for developing and sharing research activity and establishing teaching partnerships across departments, schools, and colleges may bring seemingly unrelated projects and professors together and discourage researchers from becoming isolated within their respective disciplines.

- Encourage and fund student-led initiatives and activities. This study and supporting theory indicate that student-run clubs and programs provide a safe environment for students to experience real-life workplace scenarios and challenges.

- Promote experiential learning activities and active learning methodologies. Educators should be encouraged to build meaningful experiential learning opportunities through grant and funding support at a university level and be supported in seeking individual donor and corporate sponsorship.

**Teacher Development.**

- Provide training in and incentives for using interactive teaching methods. In all disciplines but particularly in the fast-paced environment of entrepreneurship, educators need to incorporate cutting-edge techniques and technologies into the curriculum. Online forums, blogs, and chat
rooms can be useful tools for connecting and sharing but can become stale environments without the infusion of the latest media formats.

- Create entrepreneurship educators’ networks for the sharing and exchange of practices. Researchers and educators often feel most comfortable within the boundaries of their respective colleges and schools and tend to collaborate primarily with those in their own respective disciplines. By creating an online resource for researchers to share activities and areas of interest, it creates an opportunity for new research and social connections.

- Engage practitioners in the classroom. Connecting students with those who are established and have experienced success in their area offers role models and potential mentors or future employers.

- Support the creation of entrepreneurship chairs/professorships at universities. Establishing such a position brings credence to the importance of the role within the academic community and also facilitates opportunities for the endowment of the position and donor engagement for the program(s).

**Partnership with Private Sector.**

- Encourage private sector sponsorship for entrepreneurship. Facilitating private sector links with academia and forging external partnerships helps to promote current programs and research activity, and potentially gain financial support. It also provides a resource to identify training and skills development necessary for student employment and success.
• Link local and global businesses with the entrepreneurship education networks. Facilitating relationships with industry and government partners supports the triple-helix model of economic development and growth by connecting academic researchers with opportunities for applied research.

• Develop mentoring programs. Students relate to those who work in their field of interest and aspire to be like those who have achieved success. Mentors are key figures in making introductions and enabling social, and business connections that students may not otherwise have the opportunity to access.

In this limited study of 11 university programs, a wide variety of pedagogies, practices, and policies are illustrated. As entrepreneurship increasingly becomes recognized as an economic driver, there will be greater need to develop more robust curriculum and programmatic diversity within the field of entrepreneurship education (e.g., Katz & Shepherd, 2003; Matlay, 2008). To date, however, only marginal agreement has been reached regarding the key factors needed to build a quality model of higher-education entrepreneurship (Matlay & Carey, 2007). Although there are a number of different approaches, further investigation is needed to determine key components that are most effective in encouraging students to pursue entrepreneurial activities.

There is also an implication to public and private agencies outside the university environment that provide and promote entrepreneurial activity and education. Understanding how entrepreneurs learn is vital in designing programs that develop skills and provide information for new entrepreneurs and start-up companies. For example, the Dublin Entrepreneurial Center – a partnership between the City of Dublin and a private
entity – offers a “Lunch and Learn” series that brings in peers, consultants, experienced entrepreneurs and professionals in their field to share experiences and potentially collaborate on new venture creation. Understanding the needs of both the entrepreneurs and the business community and facilitating the exchange of information and ideas is the type of activity that builds a sustainable ecosystem to support an innovative economy.

**Future Research**

The findings of this study are limited to 13 educators at 11 different universities and may not necessarily reflect the general field of entrepreneurship education. Longitudinal studies that follow students throughout their education and pursuits after graduation would be beneficial in determining those key learnings and activities that best prepared them for their next venture.

Additional research should be conducted to more fully examine how experiential learning can be incorporated into the entrepreneurship curriculum. As revealed through this phenomenological study, there are a number of different activities taking place, but a more thorough understanding of professors’ perceptions of which activities are most effective would be beneficial in developing curriculum. While evidence supports the positive impact of entrepreneurship education on student intentionality (Hatten & Ruhland, 1995; Koh, 1996; Luthje & Franke, 2003), future study is needed in this area to understand if entrepreneurship education has an impact on student success.

Further, studies specifically on reflective practices within the entrepreneurship curriculum should also be undertaken. While theory supports the significance of reflection for entrepreneurs, there is little evidence to show if and how it is being incorporated into the curriculum.
Although participants were not asked to identify their gender, evidence suggests that only three of the 13 participants are female and further, only one of the three female participants comes from a traditional business background. As more women become successful entrepreneurs, future research should be conducted to explore the impact these role models will have on recruiting new female students to pursue an education in entrepreneurship.

Additionally, understanding the ratio of men versus women teaching in the field may be important in recruiting female students to future programs. This theme links directly to studies by Hatten and Ruhland, (1995); and Wang and Wong, (2004) in which they found gender, family experience of entrepreneurship, educational level and age had a direct impact on intentionality or propensity toward entrepreneurship. More specifically, studies have shown that male students and those with family-owned and run business exposure have greater intentionality (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003; Hatten & Ruhland, 1995; Scott & Twomey, 1988).

While it’s difficult to incorporate all the challenges, difficulties and potentially euphoria that students will experience should they choose to become entrepreneurs, the purpose of experiential learning is to provide a supportive environment where they may actively engage in the business world or participate in a venture. Curriculum development within the field of entrepreneurship education, therefore, must evolve to offer a more holistic approach to training and preparing these students through courses that incorporate experimentation and real-life learning situations. Not to be ignored is the social aspect of learning to work in teams with colleagues who may have very different styles of learning and operating. Understanding the value of a supportive team, colleague
or mentor is an important step in building the network necessary for successful entrepreneurship.

Closure

Through this process, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the educators that made time to speak with me at length about their teaching strategies and provide personal details and experiences. I hope to have the opportunity to follow up in person with each of them and learn more about their respective programs.

As I consider how this dissertation process and the research data may influence me in the future, I began to think more deeply about the link between entrepreneurship and economic growth. Economic development is one of my primary areas of responsibility for the City of Dublin, and I am responsible for leading both strategy development and initiatives for our “smart city” programs. As an example, I have met with a number of different start-up companies and entrepreneurs who are developing technologies and products in the field of autonomous and connected vehicles. Innovation in the automotive industry has spurred an entirely new economy, and it is the City’s goal to develop an innovation hub to support entrepreneurial education and activity and facilitate cross-collaboration between government, industry and higher-education partners in addressing the needs of society. I am certain the knowledge I have gained through the journey of this dissertation will be invaluable in my role.

As we further develop our offerings at the Dublin Entrepreneurial Center and create new programs at Ohio University’s Dublin campus, I hope to have the opportunity not only to teach and inform students about entrepreneurship practices and relevant economic policies but to also encourage and support them in becoming practitioners who
grow their businesses in our community. As a result of this research, I plan to continue further exploration into the role of women in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. I would like to learn more about the “changing face” of new entrepreneurs and the implications that may have upon staffing needs and teaching methodologies. Providing connections to a more diverse group of role models and mentors will undoubtedly be important as we educate the next generation of entrepreneurs.

In the altruistic sense, entrepreneurs identify issues and actively pursue solutions that result in new products and services for the betterment of society. Entrepreneurship spurs economic growth when entrepreneurs find ways to deliver better products for lower costs at a faster rate. Add innovators of technology to the mix and a whole new process or output may occur. Our children will have jobs that don’t exist today and be using gadgets and technology in ways we’ve not yet imagined. Teaching them to be innovative and thoughtful risk-takers will continue to challenge and ultimately change the world.
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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your experience in teaching and participating entrepreneurship education.
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. What changes have you seen in this curriculum since you began teaching? Why do you think these changes have occurred?
4. What are your perceptions about experiential learning within this curriculum?
5. What role does experiential learning have in your curriculum? Why do you view this as important?
6. Do you/how do you approach developing and incorporating active and experiential learning into your curriculum?
7. Do you/how do you engage students in activities that link theory and practice and stimulate personal reflection? Is this activity a formal part of your syllabus?
8. How do you provide a setting for each participant to clearly identify individual interest in a creative manner?
9. In what ways do you feel experiential learning activities have an impact on students’ decisions to become entrepreneurs?
10. In what ways do you feel experiential learning activities have an impact on developing students’ creative problem solving skills?
11. Do you/how do you promote reflective practices?
12. Do you consider yourself to be skilled in reflective practices?
13. Do you/how do you find ways to apply entrepreneurial thinking to your teaching style?
14. Did you participate in an experiential learning program in the course of your academic studies? If so, what impact has that had on you as an educator?
15. Do you have executives in residence in your program, and if so, in what ways do they interact with your students?
16. How do you facilitate students in linking theory to practice?
17. Is there a reflective activity or opportunity for the students to understand and identify if and how they were able to link theory & practice…that “ah ha moment.”
18. Would you give me an example of one of your biggest successes or favorite moments related to a student’s experiential learning opportunity?
Appendix B: Ohio University Consent Form

Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: Contemporary approaches to bridging classroom and experiential education within undergraduate entrepreneurship programs – A Phenomenological Study

Researchers: Donna L. Goss

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how educators teaching in undergraduate entrepreneurship programs create the environment necessary to bridge the learning that takes place inside and outside the classroom. Current research shows that when students learn how to think reflectively and carefully consider alternatives, they are well-positioned to tackle the entrepreneurial challenges associated with balancing social and commercial objectives; identifying and securing a diverse resource base; and engaging groups in the change process. In concert with the student learning experience, educators also have a unique opportunity for experiential learning and I hope to learn more about practices of educators in the field.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a one-time semi-structured interview that will last approximately 20 minutes
Risks and Discomforts

No risks or discomforts are anticipated as a result of participation in this study.

Benefits

This study is important to science/society for a number of reasons. It is my hope that this research will:

- Inform legislators, policy makers, and administrators of the importance of experiential learning within the entrepreneurship curriculum.
- Garner information that will assist legislators and policy makers in the development of appropriate opportunities for experiential learning.
- Foster better understanding of the impact of experiential learning both outside and inside the classroom, and upon students and teachers, in an effort to assist educators in the development and implementation of substantive curriculum and learning experiences within entrepreneurship programs.
- Inform additional research in an area where little empirical research currently exists.

You may not benefit personally by participating in this study.

Confidentiality and Records

Your study information will be kept confidential. All data collected will be kept on the researcher’s password protected computer. All data will be destroyed once the study is completed. Participants will not be identified by name. Every effort will be made to ensure the data is unidentifiable.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;
**Compensation**

No compensation will be provided for your participation in this study.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact: Donna Goss, Primary Investigator, dg270411@ohio.edu, 607.227.0079, or Dr. Peter Mather, Professor; Interim Dean of University College, Ohio University, matherp@ohio.edu, 740.593.4454

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature_________________________________________ Date __________________

_____  

Printed Name________________________________________

Version Date: **06/30/14**