

# STRATEGIES FOR BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

This paper takes a look at the gap between teaching and research in entrepreneurship. The paper identifies the difficulty in translating research findings into practical use in the field of entrepreneurship and also results are not utilized by teachers. This study makes use of secondary data from textbooks, journals, internet etc. It also looks at the concept of teaching, research and entrepreneurship. Findings include that research helps to improve teaching and vice versa, research is the best approach to handling most problems. There is a gap between teaching and research in entrepreneurship. It concludes that the gap can be bridged by bringing research into the classroom and applying the contributions of research to practical entrepreneurship activities to solve problems.

**Keywords:** Teaching, Research, Entrepreneurship.

Teaching is a set of events outside the learners which are designed to support the internal process of learning. The learning process increases when the teacher builds on previous experience of the student. Thus, effective learning is to a great extent, based on experience. Research becomes valuable to teachers when it involves translating theory into practice. However, the concept of applicability differs between researchers and teachers. It is at this point that distance between the two begins to emerge. Learning is more likely to be effective when it is related to, and conducted in the knowledge of a student's (work) experience.

However, the concept of applying risks taking and innovation/knowledge in doing things which entails creativity, brought about entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship demands that the individual should be prepared to assume reasonable degree of risks in addition to being highly innovative. Individuals vary widely in their views about the nature of the linkage between teaching, research and entrepreneurship. Teaching and research should not be seen as independent activities. They should be seen as integrated process that re-enforce each other and would help to understand new aspects of entrepreneurship.

**Concept of Teaching:**

A teacher is a person who provides education for students ([www.wikipedia.org/Teacher](http://www.wikipedia.org/Teacher); 2015). The teacher is the one who imparts the knowledge (Nnachi, 2013). The teacher teaches the learner.

Teaching is a set of events outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning. Teaching (instruction) is outside the learner. Learning is internal to learners. You cannot motivate others if you are not self-motivated. Motives are not seen but behaviours are seen. Is learning a motive or behavior? Learning is both a motive and behaviour but only behavior is seen, learning is internal, performance is external.

Generally, the role of teachers can be categorized into:

- Traditional Role – Teacher-Centered
- Modern Role – Facilitator (Student Centered) (Nnachi, 2015)

There has been a change from the traditional role to the modern role in the present context. The learning increases when the teacher builds on the previous experience of the student. However, individual’s learning differs and each individual learns at his or her own pace. Identifying the slow learners who need individual attention of the teacher maybe required. Thus, effective learning is to a great extent based on experience. Direct experiences are student centered and participation in problem solving. While in direct experience, the contents are carefully designed and organized by the teacher.

**Basic Teaching Model:**

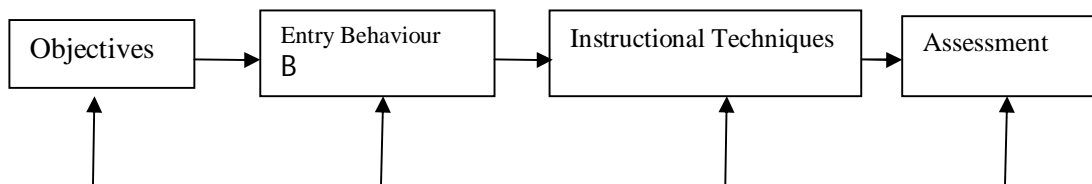
The basic teaching model by Glaser (1962) in Farooq (2014) are in the following domain:

General Objective – Statement of instructional intent – student ability in general terms. Specific objective statement of instructional intent – student ability in terms of specific and observable. Usefulness of objectives, elements of objectives, terminal behaviour condition and criterion/criteria.

Writers tend to separate into three domains. These are the psychomotor, cognitive and affective domain. Those skills, which are concerned with physical dexterity, for example, changing a wheel and giving an injection fall into the psychomotor domain. Both of the tasks do need knowledge but predominantly they are physical skills which need practice, knowledge and knowing the how and the why. The thinking skills fall into the cognitive domain. Examples include starting the names of the major bones in the body, explaining why we have tides. Both of these require thought processes to be accomplished.

The third domain, and one we often neglect, is the affective domain. This is concerned with attitude. Examples in this domain include the need to eat a healthy, balanced diet: the need for equality of opportunity for all, and ‘politeness’. These deal with feelings and emotions and are different from the examples in the other domains.

Affective learning occurs when these three domains are seen as interdependent. Each of these domains should be developed as part of teaching/learning session. Teachers should be able to define learning objective in each of them. Learning in these three domains often needs different teaching approaches. They are often considered in isolation but un practice, learning may occur simultaneously in all three.



Evaluation and Feedback

Source: *Basic teaching model by Robert Glaser (1962) cited in Farooq (2014)*

### **Teaching Versus Modern Role**

Traditionally, the role of the teacher has been a purveyor of information: the teacher was the fount of all knowledge. This suggests a picture of students sitting in rows in front of the teacher who is talking and passing information to students with the aid of a blackboard while the students either listen passively or; if the teacher is lucky, take their own notes.

This, of course, is not so any more. The modern teacher is a facilitator; a person who assists students to learn for themselves. Instead of having students sitting in rows, they are likely to be in groups, all doing something different; some doing practical tasks, some writing, some not even in the room but in another part of the building using specialist equipment or looking up something in the library. All of the students might well be at different stages in their learning and in consequence, the learning is individualized to suit individual requirements and abilities (Farooq, 2014).

Researches into the way that people learn has not provided teachers with any specific answers. If it had, all teachers will be using the same techniques. However, researchers have identified that learning is generally more effective if it is based on experiences, either direct experience or experiences that have been read about. Of the two experiences, the former is more likely to be effective than the later. Thus, concepts that are to be practiced or seen are more likely to be learnt. To apply this in a situation in a post-16 education and training, learning is more likely to be effective when it is related to, and conducted in the learning of the student's (work) experience.

Teachers need at this stage, to consider how they might consider two possible approaches to the design of a teaching programme. (Farooq, 2014)

- i. A programme where the content is carefully derived from an analysis of the student's personal, social and/or vocational needs and which is implemented by the teacher in such a controlled and organized manner that the student is almost certain to learn, and is aware when the learning has taken place. By this method, motivation is generated by immediate success and the avoidance of failure.

Unfortunately, this rarely takes place because it has fundamental drawback. Apart from the requirement for the students to place themselves in the hands of the teacher and thus, tend to develop a relationship of dependency, it does not help the students to learn on their own.

- ii. The other approach starts from the experience of the student, experience has taken place as part of life or which has been organized as part of the programme. It then depends upon the student identifying and accepting a need to learn. Such an approach has been described as 'problem solving', and that each area is learned as effectively as possible.

Teaching methods which allow this second approach to be implemented include:

- Project work derived from students' current experience.
- Discussions which allow the students to recognize and consolidate what the experience has taught them, and lead them to identify what else the need to learn and practice.
- The learning of specific problem-solving technique which can be applied to a range of situations.
- Activities designed to provide opportunities for specific learning outcomes.

Such a list of teaching approaches identifies a second problem associated; that of (over) concentrating on the activities – the practical work which tends to be more enjoyable, and neglecting to recognize the possible learning that can accrue from such activities.

Entrepreneurship refers to the capacity and attitude of a person or a group of persons to undertake ventures with the probability of success or failure (Aham, 1999). Entrepreneurship demands that the individual should be prepared to assume reasonable degree of risks in addition to being highly innovative. As such, entrepreneurship may reflect superior information and perhaps, more importantly reduce the risk and uncertainties of new opportunities which are ignored or rejected by other investors.

Brugnoli (1990) focuses his work on the identification of a set of possible ‘matrixes’ that could determine the birth of new entrepreneurial opportunity, within corporate and independent entrepreneurship processes. In his analysis, he identifies three perspectives that have studied the phenomenon: a) psychological, that separates the entrepreneur from the entrepreneurial opportunity; b) cultural, where the determinant of entrepreneurial process is the presence of a certain set of beliefs in the culture of the individuals; c) relational, based on theory of the ‘population ecology’. Sources of entrepreneurial activities are therefore the individuals with their characteristics and experience, but also firms, the local network, universities, centers of research and the family.

Invemizzi, Molteni and Corbetta (1990) distinguish the entrepreneurial function from the managerial one; the former concerns the research of a new strategic paradigm, while the later is about efficiency and effectiveness. The main idea of their study is that it is possible to join these two functions toward an “entrepreneurial management”, where all the managerial resources are addressed to the vitality and durability in the long term of the firm. Strategies that emphasize the adoption of entrepreneurial management are: 1) internal development; 2) internal ventures; 3) joint ventures; 4) new style joint ventures or alliances; 5) acquisition; 6) venture capital; 7) educational acquisition; 8) other strategies as licensing, franchising and spin-off (Invemizzi, Molteni and Corbetta, 1990).

Invemizzi (1993) explicitly focuses his attention on corporate entrepreneurship, where entrepreneurship is considered as the ability of conceiving, elaborating and realizing an innovative “entrepreneurial synthesis”. Such a synthesis must entail three aspects coherently linked between each other.

1. The perceived needs of potential customers;
2. The product/service offered to satisfy these needs;
3. The resources and competencies that need to be organized and developed to sustain the idea.

The scholar consistently with other contributors identifies contextual factors that stimulate entrepreneurial process. Beside a cultural and social context, Invemizzi considers strategic and organizational context, especially focusing on the system of resource allocation, reward and accounting. Common characteristics of all these three areas are orientation to new activities, tolerance errors and focus on long term objectivities.

Another contribution of great significance is represented by the analysis of Sorrentino (1996), who suggests internal entrepreneurship as the best way to foster innovation within an existing organization. The scholar demonstrates how internal entrepreneurship can overcome all the obstacles that characterize the relations ruled by a contract of agency and therefore, it is suitable in stimulating innovation in the firm. Sorrentino also emphasizes the circular nature of entrepreneurial processes, highlighting how every for change enforces the innovative capacity of the company.

More recently, Salvato (2003) has presented a deep analysis of the processes through which entrepreneurial opportunities come to existence, are identified and spotted within organization. Given the objective existence of opportunities and their relevance, the entrepreneurial processes are analyzed at both individual and organizational levels, underlining the organizational factors and capabilities that enhance companies to pursue continuous innovations.

### **Concept of Research**

Research comprises “creative” work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humans, culture and society and the use of this stock of knowledge to advise new applications. It is used to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous work, solve new or existing problems, support theorems, or develop new or existing problems, support theorems or develop new theories. A research project may also be an expansion of past work in elements of the field. To test the validity of instruments, procedures, or experiments, research may replicate elements of prior projects, or the project as a whole. The primary purpose of basic research (as opposed to

applied research), are documentation, discovery, interpretation, or the research and development (R & D) of methods and systems for the advancement of human knowledge. Approaches to research depend on human epistemologies which vary considerably both within and between humanities and sciences. There are several forms of research: scientific, humanities, artistic, economic, social, business, marketing, practitioner research, etc.

### **Forms of Research**

**Scientific Research:** is a systematic way of gathering data and harnessing curiosity. This research provides scientific information and theories for the explanation of the nature and the properties of the world. It makes practical applications possible. Scientific research is funded by public authorities, by charitable organizations and by private groups, including many companies. Scientific research can be subdivided into different classifications according to their academic and application disciplines. Scientific research is a widely used criterion for judging the standing of an academic institution, such as business schools, but some argue that such is an inaccurate assessment of the institution, because the quality of research does not tell about the quality of teaching (they do not necessarily correlate totally).

**Research in the Humanities:** involves different methods such as for example, hermeneutics and semiotics, and a different, more relativist epistemology. Humanities scholars usually do not search for the ultimate correct answer to a question, but instead explore the issue and details that surround it. Context is always important, and context can be social, historical, political, cultural or ethnic. An example of research in the humanities is historical research, which is embodied in historical method. Historians use primary sources and other evidence to systematically investigate a topic, and then to write histories in the form of accounts of the past.

**Artistic Research:** also seen as ‘practiced-based research’, can take form when creative works are considered for both the research and the object of the research itself. It is the debatable body of thought which offers an alternative to purely scientific methods in research in its search for knowledge and truth.

**Steps in Conducting Research:** research is often conducted using the hourglass model starts with a broad spectrum for research, focusing on the required information through the method of the project (like the neck of the hour glass), then expands the research in the form of discussion and results. The major steps in conducting research are:

- Identification of research problems
- Literature review

- Specifying the purpose of research
- Determine specific research questions
- Specification of a conceptual framework – usually a set of hypothesis
- Choice of methodology (for data collection)
- Data collection
- Analyzing and interpreting the data
- Reporting and evaluating research
- Communicating the research findings and possibly, recommendations

### **Relationship Between Research and Entrepreneurship**

Despite a strong common attention in entrepreneurship, the academic legitimacy of the field is still modest (Low, 2001). This could be due first of all, to a lack of a clear and unique definition of the term entrepreneurship itself. Several analysis of the entrepreneurship literature reveal that researchers have too often developed their own definition of the concept without building on the work of the others, so that “entrepreneurship” becomes a wide label under which broad army of research efforts are focused (Shane and Venkatanaran, 2000). The term has been used for more than two centuries, but scholars continue to extend, reinterpret and revise the definition (Bull and Willard, 1993, 1995). Such a variety of definitions is due on one hand, to the complex nature of the phenomenon, and on the other hand to the fact that they have been provided by researchers operating in heterogeneous fields (economic, sociology, finance, psychology, anthropology) with divergent terms of reference and purposes. Here, you find some of the most contributing definitions that have arisen in the last two decades.

Entrepreneurial opportunities are seen as existing because different economic agents have different beliefs about the relative value of resources, given the potential to transform them into a different state. In turn, these different beliefs depend on asymmetries of knowledge available to economic agents, and on their different abilities to recognize the value of new knowledge, assimilate it and apply it to processes of innovation (Shane and Venkatamaran, 2000). Knowledge is therefore at the core of the opportunity recognition process.

Opportunity exploitation consists in combining existing and new resources and competences. Knowledge is then a component of the recombination activity. Moreover, the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities requires knowledge not only as object of the recombination process but also as engine of it, as capability to run the recombination process itself.

This knowledge-based perspective seems to be the most adequate one for the development of a theory of entrepreneurship, no matter the subject of the entrepreneurial activity (individual or organization). It represents the ideal way to let strategic management to cross-fertilize entrepreneurship studies: the knowledge-based perspective of the firm, conceiving companies as bundles of information and competencies (Grant, 1996), derive from the well established dynamic capabilities approach which has been prevailing in the study of strategic formulation.

The issue of outcomes is at the core of the quest for a clear definition of the entrepreneurship research boundaries. As already mentioned, Davidson (2003) proposes a three-level definition of entrepreneurship, which distinguishes the field of inquiry from the social phenomenon and the teaching subject. What distinguishes the three definitions is just the level of outcomes taken into consideration. Considering entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon means focusing on the social impact of entrepreneurial processes, therefore including all re-combinations of resources that drive the market to equilibrium and so “to improve the use of resources in the economic system as a whole (Davidson, 2003). In order to be defined as entrepreneurial, the new economic activity must bring positive outcomes on the societal level, no matter the positive or negative performances at venture level. The definition is consistent

with Kirzner's one, according to which entrepreneurship is "the competitive behavior that drive the market process" (Kirzner, 1973), with Gartner, (1988) "emergence of new organization" and the "new entry" of Lumpkin and Dess (1996).

Finally, entrepreneurship as teaching subject can be defined as "the study of how opportunity to create future goods and services can be successfully discovered and exploited" (Davidson, 2003). In this perspective, it is therefore natural to focus only on successful outcomes on the micro level. In this case, the purpose and motivation, skill or expertise expectations of gain for self are central interest, even if not necessary ingredients of entrepreneurship or societal phenomenon or scholarly domain (Bull and Willard, 1993; Cole, 1949; Fiet, 2002; Gartner, 1990; Hirdrisch and Peters, 1989).

Low (2001) identifies four different strategies for future entrepreneurship research. The first relegates entrepreneurship research to the role of facilitating the functions of new enterprises through teaching support, without trying to explain the phenomenon. It would mean aiming at just integrating the results of research on other fields and transferring them to the community, abandoning the goal of an academic legitimacy.

The second way the entrepreneurship researchers can take is to consider the subject as a 'potpourri', that means leaving the situation as it is. Even if this situation could attract many contributors, it will imply reducing the legitimization of the research that will still not get its clear direction. A third solution would be letting entrepreneurship research "belong in the disciplines". According to this view, there is no need for a theory of entrepreneurship. Even if it is interesting and coherent with the multidisciplinary nature of the entrepreneurial phenomenon, this idea cannot be completely accepted. It is possible that such a research method would create some blank areas in the entrepreneurial process that are not explained by any discipline of interest. Adopting such a strategy will create a lack of community, avoiding dialogues to foster the development of the research. The last strategy consists in creating entrepreneurship as a distinctive field of study.

As already stressed, many contributions could be offered by research on strategic management, which shares with entrepreneurship the interest in the micro-level and the familiarity with the heterogeneity. It can contribute to entrepreneurship in several ways: the investigation of the organizational characteristics and management practices to foster discovery and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities; the management of innovation; the study of the relationship between firm's quantity/quality of new venturing and firm performance.

Economists can explain why opportunities come into existence and how entrepreneurial efforts are influenced by reward structure (Baumol, 1990, 1993). An economic approach suits the investigation of the environmental aspects of entrepreneurship and the micro-to-macro linkages about entrepreneurial outcomes (Acs, Carosson and Karlsson, 1999; Vennekers, Thurik and Buis, 1997). Moreover entrepreneurship can learn from economics its theory-drivenness, deduction of hypothesis, stringency of concepts, demand on internal consistency and clarity of exposition.

Psychology (especially the fast growing cognitive branch of the discipline) could explain why certain individuals pursue opportunities and not others, describing crucial dimensions both in the phrases of opportunity discovery and evaluation. Of course, psychological analysis will focus on the entrepreneur, while less could be explained under this about other aspects of the process..

Sociology can offer important instruments to understand entrepreneurship, as it focuses on macro level aggregated aspects, and can be the best perspective to study ethnic and cultural aspects of the

phenomena. Geography can enrich entrepreneurial research too, for reasons similar to the ones stated for sociology.

History could help in marking out opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2001), but retrospective analysis often used in historical method does not fit to entrepreneurship research needs.

All the considerations emerged so far, constitute the premises of future research. Only after a clear conceptualization of a common perspective of study for entrepreneurial phenomena it is possible to identify topics of interest and to address research efforts in a coherent way.

### **The Gap between Teaching Research in Entrepreneurship**

The entrepreneurial process entails two important dimensions: the first is the recognition of opportunity, while the second is the acquisition of resources and the formulation of a business strategy. Regarding organizational forms, research scholars put emphasis on four main alternatives. Corporate Venturing, Management Buy-Out and Buy- Ins, Franchising and Family Firms. The environment forces that influence entrepreneurial behaviour are still not explored, and therefore, more studies are needed. Outcomes can be considered under many perspectives and different levels; the prevailing studies present in the literature are objective, while there is still space for subjective evaluation, considering expectation, aspiration and skills of the individual entrepreneurs.

The scope of research is becoming wider, since within the identified issues, different relevant entities of studying are emerging. As a matter of fact, different types of entrepreneurs and of entrepreneurial organizations have been identified, while the use of cognitive method and heuristic-based model could help to understand new aspects of entrepreneurship.

It is interesting to highlight the fact only one relational i.e. the entrepreneurial activities and the outcome of his business. The general characteristics of entrepreneurship like; the need to achieve, moderate and calculated risk taking ability, high sense of personal efficiency, problem solving ability, tendency to analyze business environment, etc. are yet to be identified. Learning is the feedback mechanism that links outcomes of the entrepreneurial actions to individuals but what explains connections between the other issues has not been conceptualized yet. Therefore, as the study emphasizes future studies should focus on more precisely defined entities, context and relationship. It is believed that research will identify these entities and proffer solutions that will bridge the gap.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is of the view that research is intended to improve teaching and entrepreneurship. Teaching and research compliment each other and help to improve upon entrepreneurial practices. But to achieve the best, teachers should identify the gaps and work hard to bring research into the classroom, find out what contributions research makes to the society, encourage teacher/researcher collaborations and find out how research findings could help to solve worlds problems, apply research methods practically to teaching and entrepreneurial activities.

### **Recommendations**

1. Teachers should use research-based strategies which contains analytic rigor and thoughtful skepticism while teaching their students entrepreneurship education.
2. Difficult learners have varying backgrounds, skills and needs. Therefore, teachers should ensure that practice and policy decisions are appropriate for the full range of learners in a setting.
3. Research and learning should be a collaborative activity since it stimulates conversation among researchers and all involved in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education.
4. Research and teaching should address complex issues teachers face on a daily basis.



5. It is important that those who traditionally have been given little opportunity to participate in decision-making, such as teachers and parents in poor communities be invited to participate in determining the issues on which research should focus.
6. Researchers should be made to give complete explanation on how a given study contributes to our understanding of teaching and learning.

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