

EXPLORING FACULTY MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

by

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to each person who has made a difference in my life by supporting and educating me over the years. I make a difference, do you?

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Thanks to God for giving me the skills to finish this challenge. Also, many thanks to the members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Shahron Williams van Rooij, Dr. Susan Bon, and Dr. Anastasia Samaras, for providing timely feedback on my work and career advice. A very special thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Shahron Williams van Rooij, who from day one told me to get it done! Additionally, a very special thanks to my dear friends Delia Racines and Molly Gaudry! Delia—you continually motivated me to follow my love of learning. Molly—you pushed me to keep writing more precisely and routinely. Thanks to my family, Tone, Gene, and Kristian, for all of their love and support and my Norwegian-American grandparents who planted seeds for success in my childhood. Jeg elsker dere! Thanks to my dogs, Rambo and Konrad, you were so patient with me when I wrote and kept me smiling when I needed motivation. Konrad—I will never forget your influence on my life. Finally thanks to my colleagues, my mentors, especially Dr. Erica Wagner, Dr. Steve Gladis, John Casey, Patricia Tobin, Kirk Reese, Dr. Reidar Mykletun, Mark and Reneta McCarthy, Dr. Steve Carvell, J. Goodlett McDaniel, Dr. Gary Galluzzo, Dr. Gabriele Piccoli, and friends, supporters, and teachers, especially Tuhina Chakrabarti, Christian Hicks, Anne May Samuelsen, Irene Langemyr, Teresa Marcarelli, Joan Stuelpner, Charles Herbek, Phimolwan Rungsaengmanoon, Yuta Kato, Victor Krohn, Christopher Pedersen, Ase Helene Dagsland, Phyllis Carlson, Phil Miller, Russell Wojtusiak, Rena Levin, Andrew Stockel, Lauren Snow, Alexander Yun, James Freeman, John Fenninger, Claire Kim, Rune Larsen, Dr. Trude Furunes, Dr. Yuko Onozaka, Dr. Elisabeth Lind Melbye, Guro Aare, Dr. Elin Oftedal, Dr. Lene Foss, Dr. Tatiana Iakovleva, Rolf Skodjereite, Ase Helene Dagnes, Christian Buschmann Ekeland, Baan Alsinawi, Timm Johnson, Tone-Lill Hansen, Dr. Ren Powell, Amanda Doyle, Aron Saint-Aubin, Ramya Padoor Rajgopal, Prasanna Hebbar, Tore Hansen, Gracie Boliek, Trina Halfhide, Dr. Arthur Mason, Federico Lozano, Nina Kjorkleiv, Felicia Der, Rosa Ayala, Jacobo Flores, Mary Ann Grimnes, Uladzimir Kamovich, Ian Pedersen, Annie Haver, Anethe Sandve, Marte Cecilie Wilhelmsen Solheim, Garrett McNamara, Karen Elisabeth Ohm Heskja, Sjur Eivind Usken, Anne Flaten, Laurenn Strabone, Lindsey Boran, and Tora Matsuoka for keeping me laughing while I created Gypsy Tornado as an outlet for seashell designing to maintain clarity, sanity, and creativity while working towards this doctoral degree.

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## ABSTRACT

### EXPLORING FACULTY MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

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In the United States, there is an increasing focus to create programmatic initiatives that encourage entrepreneurship in order to aid in economic recovery. While seeking funding opportunities, institutions of higher education must determine strategies to be innovative within the university. Administrators want to create practical curricula that will encourage the student body to engage specifically in entrepreneurial activities that will create economic impact post-graduation. Administrators designing entrepreneurship programs do not have access to studies that share faculty perspectives on the growing discipline of entrepreneurship. Faculty members are key stakeholders in the evolution of entrepreneurship education; they are the lynchpin between the professional and the academic domains. The purpose of this research was to explore faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education. The research generated a working theory to inform administrators about faculty perspectives when designing

undergraduate entrepreneurship programs. This working theory calls upon administrators to reveal the value of entrepreneurship and engage students when defining and designing an undergraduate entrepreneurship curriculum. Using a qualitative grounded theory design, the research consisted of a two-phase data collection process that ran from August to December 2012 and consisted of a 10 minute web-based free write activity and a semi-structured phone interview that averaged 45 minutes per participant. The participants were faculty members from 25 universities listed in Entrepreneur.com's 2011 ranking of top undergraduate entrepreneurship programs in the United States. The research identified faculty perspectives on the purpose of entrepreneurship education including: (a) revealing the value of entrepreneurship; (b) encouraging economic development; (c) validating the entrepreneurial lifestyle; (d) explaining the myth of entrepreneurship; (e) articulating how to identify and exploit opportunity; and (f) linking creative and predictive logic. The research revealed how faculty members perceived the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction by (a) assuring relevancy; (b) nurturing reflection; and (c) driving outreach. Finally, the research documented six future priorities for the faculty members in their own teaching: (a) encouraging peer-evaluation; (b) nurturing reflection; (c) guiding experiential learning; (d) adapting to students; (e) generating networks; and (f) embracing new content.

## CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Can you teach entrepreneurship? When you pick up a newspaper like *The Wall Street Journal* or *The Washington Post*, you notice an increasing focus on publicizing opinions as to whether entrepreneurship can be taught. Zahra, Newey, and Shaver (2011) note that entrepreneurship has caught the imagination of the public and policy makers. The media completes surveys and provides commentary to keep up with the buzz surrounding the concept of entrepreneurship, especially in the realm of higher education. Universities look to keep up in order to align with the media craze. Administrators look to evolve their practices to include entrepreneurship in the course catalogs. Administrators also focus on incorporating teaching styles that have a more practical application of instruction into the curricula. Universities look to ensure that they are creating programming that will better position them to be able to obtain funding from both public and private project initiatives.

### **Background**

The focus on economic development and innovation initiatives to help drive economic prosperity and innovation has resulted in an increased focus and discussion on entrepreneurship education among various university stakeholders. Though entrepreneurship education has been around since 1947, it has not been a primary focus of undergraduate level curriculum. In the past decade, entrepreneurship education has

become a focus in the strategic planning of curriculum development across programs (Katz, 2003). It is stated that one of the objectives of entrepreneurship education is to encourage students to start their own businesses and to develop the skills and competencies to be successful in their own ventures (Harkema & Schout, 2008).

University administrators and economic development officials want efficiencies; the goal is to encourage both profit-driven and social-driven enterprise creation through entrepreneurship education.

Historically, business schools have served as the anchor department for entrepreneurship classes. Notably, business schools are experienced in being able to demonstrate the immediate economic significance of their activities to students, alumni, faculty, and local communities (Katz, 2003). The link between entrepreneurship courses and economic value creation has driven entrepreneurship courses in the for-profit space. Now, administrators are looking at how and where entrepreneurship education should be anchored within a university in order to most effectively serve a diverse undergraduate student population with multidisciplinary interests.

Critics of entrepreneurship education maintain that entrepreneurship programs create profit-driven, commercial enterprises; therefore, disciplines like liberal arts and entrepreneurship end up on opposite sides of the academy despite their common foundations (Godwyn, 2009). Liberal arts studies have been at the forefront of social entrepreneurship initiatives. This focus has shifted the spotlight on how to overcome the stovepipe mentalities in universities, where departments are setup and incentivized to work within their own discipline versus across the university in a multi-disciplinary

fashion. With an increasing trend to find operational efficiencies in multi-disciplinary education, there is an inclination to encourage both profit-driven and social-driven enterprise creation through entrepreneurship education (Pribaldi, 2005). The stovepipe nature of the organizational and funding structures of most university departments has been a challenge to continuing innovation across a university.

### **Current State of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is becoming more of a dominant force in the United States as the need for solutions to encourage economic development is increasing due to a stressed economy. Entrepreneurship generates innovation in the delivery of services and the improvement in the creation of American goods, both of which contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life of Americans. Entrepreneurship also generates revenues that can be taxed to stimulate regional economies. According to the Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity (2011), more Americans became entrepreneurs during the Great Recession, which took place in the late 2000s, than at any time in the past 15 years; the Great Recession pushing many into business ownership because of high rates of unemployment. Startups are job creation engines and play a strong role in the continued recovery from the Great Recession. This focus on startups can be seen in looking at the Startup America initiative within the government in the United States.

To encourage startups in the United States, entrepreneur-focused policy initiatives have become a focus of the Obama Administration. According to the Startup America initiative (2011), their five areas of focus for this initiative are: (a) unlocking access to capital to fuel startup growth (b) connecting mentors and education to entrepreneurs; (c)

reducing barriers and making government work for entrepreneurs; (d) accelerating innovation from “lab to market” for breakthrough technologies; and (e) unleashing market opportunities in industries like healthcare, clean energy, and education. Out of these five initiatives, the second initiative, connecting mentors and education to entrepreneurs has implications for higher education.

According to the Kauffman Report on Entrepreneurship in American Higher Education (2011), entrepreneurship is one of the fastest growing subjects in undergraduate programs. As government policies create programs like The Startup America Initiative, more focus goes to entrepreneurial course instruction. This focus on course instruction directly impacts faculty members, especially at institutions of higher education that are vying for publically funded grant opportunities in the competitive economic environment. Institutions of higher education are trying to balance limited resources with the need to create new programming and curricula to encourage entrepreneurship in the United States.

At the same time, the interest in entrepreneurship education is increasing, specifically at the undergraduate level. Faculty members are increasingly teaching more courses on entrepreneurship education to undergraduates. As these undergraduates complete their degrees and become alumni, there is a higher likelihood that these former students will create small businesses. According to Bolton and Thompson (2004), entrepreneurs are people who build something of perceived value around opportunities that they see. The small businesses that entrepreneurs create generate economic impact in

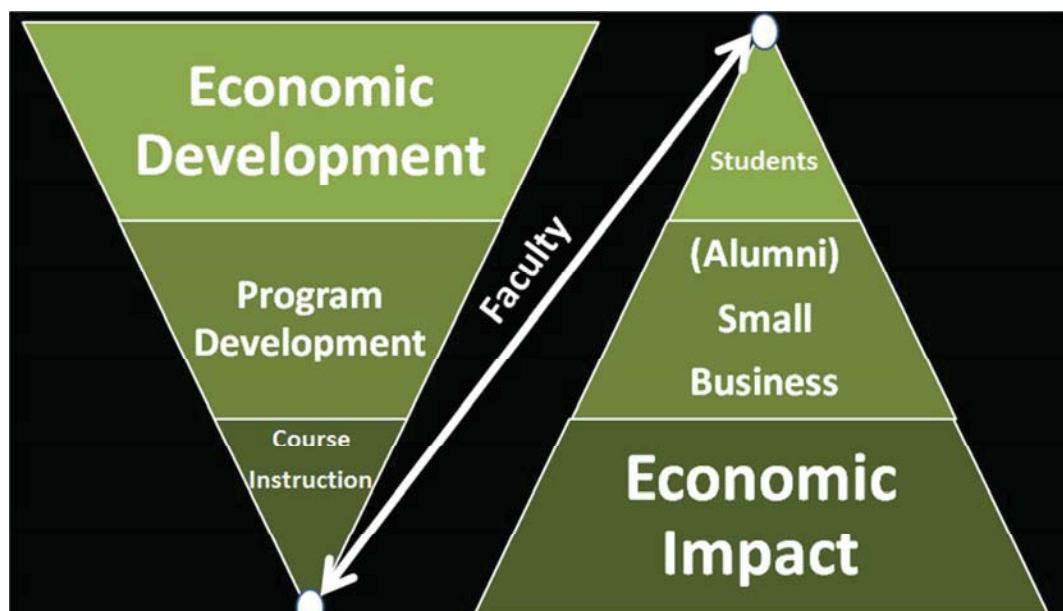
their respective regions which subsequently counts for the job creation that is intended to be encouraged due to the changing pro-entrepreneurial government initiatives.

Entrepreneurship is not a new topic for research. The term “entrepreneurship education” is always evolving and has left many areas for research unexplored. One major area that has not been fully researched is how to create PhD programs to empower the next generation of faculty members to teach upcoming entrepreneurs (Bernstein & Carayannis, 2011). Papers and research studies typically revolve around the idea of whether entrepreneurship education is teachable or not, and if teachable, what type of model should be applied (Kleiman, 2008).

The irony of the models and research presented is that they highlight the difficulty in defining “entrepreneurship” due to its inherently evolving nature (Pribadi, 2005). Pribaldi states that the integration of entrepreneurship into specific ecosystems needs to be addressed before selecting a foundational model to structure curriculum development in a university. Institutions and infrastructure play a central role in defining how programs are incentivized in a system (Soskice, 1994). The importance of understanding the culture and background of a university is core to successfully incorporating entrepreneurial education into the curriculum, particularly because the ability to identify and document the value of entrepreneurship education has yet to be fully studied.

## Problem Statement

When looking at the landscape of the environmental climate of entrepreneurship education, faculty members play an extremely important role. As shown in Figure 1, faculty members are essentially lynchpins, connecting the academic and the practical within the entrepreneurial space. The two triangles represent the academic and the practical funnels in entrepreneurship that are bridged by faculty at universities. Economic development authorities and agencies provide initiatives to encourage program development to teach entrepreneurship. These programs are comprised of courses that are taught by faculty. These faculty members teach students who become alumni that are involved in a wide range of activities, including small business. These small businesses create economic impact and meet the goals of economic development agencies.



*Figure 1.* Faculty members link the academic and the practical.



While research studies in the field of undergraduate entrepreneurship education have grown over the past few years, there are still gaps in the literature. The qualitative faculty perspective within this entrepreneurial space has not been extensively researched.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The need to research how specific entrepreneurship educational initiatives can further ensure and measure entrepreneurial success is needed. Albornoz's (2008) research suggests that entrepreneurial experience and teaching perspective are related to curriculum design and indicates that future research should explore the relationship of teaching perspective to curriculum development. Taking Albornoz's recommendation is foundational to incorporating the voices of faculty members in future innovation in curriculum. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education.

The research generated a working theory to inform administrators about faculty perspectives when designing undergraduate entrepreneurship programs. This working theory calls administrators to reveal the value of entrepreneurship and engage when defining and designing undergraduate entrepreneurship curriculum; the working theory was driven by the answers to the research question and its three sub-components. Creswell (2007) notes that a central research question, in this study which is to identify faculty perceptions relating to undergraduate entrepreneurship education, is followed by procedural sub-questions. The three sub-questions relating to understanding faculty perceptions included:

1. What is the purpose of entrepreneurship education?

2. What is the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction?
3. What are the future priorities and/or goals in their own teaching?

The research determined faculty perspectives on the purpose of entrepreneurship education including: (a) revealing the value of entrepreneurship; (b) encouraging economic development; (c) validating the entrepreneurial lifestyle; (d) explaining the myth of entrepreneurship; (e) articulating how to identify and exploit opportunity; and (f) linking creative and predictive logic. It revealed how faculty members perceive the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction in the classroom at their respective universities by: (a) assuring relevancy; (b) nurturing reflection; (c) and driving outreach. Finally, the research documented six future priorities for the faculty members in their teaching of undergraduate entrepreneurship: (a) encouraging peer-evaluation; (b) nurturing reflection; (c) guiding experiential learning; (d) adapting to students; (e) generating networks; and (f) embracing new content.

### **Practical and Academic Significance**

This research was important because it contributed to the development of a working theory on how practical education should be incorporated into entrepreneurship programs in higher education to align both with policy and curriculum priorities. This working theory can be operationalized and might improve policy. This research started and extended current research on entrepreneurship education content and most importantly, provided a voice for faculty member viewpoints. As stated previously, faculty members are the connecting link between the professional and the academic domains. Their impact on students and in the facilitation of entrepreneurship at the

undergraduate level has implications for course instruction, program development, and economic development. Faculty members also impact students, alumni that might be in small businesses, and the economic impact of small businesses. The economic impact of these small businesses affects not only alumni donations but the regional economies in which these small businesses operate on a routine basis.

### **Researcher Lens**

My curiosity for understanding entrepreneurship education, specifically the faculty member perspective, comes from my experiences starting a nonprofit in June 2010 called iMADdu, which stands for ‘I make a difference, do you’, and from my previous employment as a research faculty member at George Mason University at the Office of Research and Economic Development for the Mason Small Business Development Center (SBDC). iMADdu’s mission is to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs through apprenticeship and mentorship. The Student Apprenticeship Program (SAP) at iMADdu bridges the gap between academic and the practical in hopes of building experiential opportunities that allow for both failure and growth in the students it serves. My mother has continually encouraged me to “Make it a MAD Day!” iMADdu represents my ability to live up to my mother’s challenge—to make a difference.

From my experiences working at Mason SBDC, I see a large disconnect between the skills and knowledge that are needed for entrepreneurs to be successful and what is being taught at the undergraduate level. While key concepts of management and entrepreneurship are taught, current curriculum does not address the many lifestyle and

personality facets that are directly related to success in an entrepreneurial venture.

Through an Operations Internship Program I started in 2009 at Mason SBDC, I saw over 40 high school and college students participate in the program. The students came from various schools across a wide geographic region.

The variety of knowledge on entrepreneurship that the students had acquired from their respective schools before entering the program was alarming. Students generally learned about entrepreneurship as a discipline but did not understand the impact of the key facets of a formal plan to build a value-creating venture. What is the point of entrepreneurship education if it is only theoretical and cannot be applied in a practical fashion? I wanted to understand university priorities in creating entrepreneurship curriculum—what drives what concepts are taught, how the topics for coursework are selected, how university stakeholders perceive the world of entrepreneurship outside of academia, and to what extent does this perception drive curriculum development.

In completing my review of literature, I noticed that many of these areas have been covered, but the one major perspective that had been neglected is the viewpoint of the faculty member. The viewpoints of the faculty members are generally missing relating to their perspective on the purpose of entrepreneurship and how they see their own impact on the link between theory and practice in their course instruction.

Over the course of four years, I watched over 500 seasoned entrepreneurs and start-up entrepreneurs reach out to Mason SBDC to get counseling assistance. During this time, I became intrigued by understanding how entrepreneurs come into existence. In each of my counseling sessions, I learned about specific disciplines within business but

also about strategies and methods that various entrepreneurs employed in order to succeed. Specifically, I became fascinated by what common skill sets entrepreneurs have that enable success in their respective ventures. I wondered how these skill sets are viewed by faculty members teaching courses—do faculty members teaching entrepreneurship have experience in the field?

One key skill set that I often saw in successful entrepreneurial ventures was the acceptance of failure as a stepping stone in a growth path forward. Now this acceptance of failure might be because of the larger ramifications of a sunk cost in a venture or a large ego, but it could also be a result of an entrepreneur's ability to persevere or think through alternative paths forward from a failing situation. I often wondered where entrepreneurs learn this as it did not seem to be a skill that is introduced in the traditional school system in the United States, especially at the undergraduate level at a university. From my observations as a student at Cornell University, the University of Virginia, and George Mason University, failure is not widely tolerated nor financially feasible for most students. I wanted to understand how faculty members provided opportunities or experiences in the classroom to connect the academic to the practical in a meaningful way for students.

With increasing pressure for universities to stay academically competitive with entrepreneurship while balancing income streams from both students and grants, administrators need information on key stakeholders in their academic environment. Since faculty members play such a connecting role for universities between the outside world and the academy, their perspectives need to be incorporated in order to more

effectively manage future entrepreneurship education development to align with governmental policies but also to aid in economic recovery.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

In the next chapter, relevant literature is highlighted to note the connections between this study and the broader literature on economic development, university curriculum, and course instruction. Chapter 3 describes the method that was used to gather the data for analysis in this study. Chapter 4 describes the findings from the research. Finally, Chapter 5 provides discussion on the working theory, reviews limitations of the research, and identifies areas for future research.

### Definition of Key Terms\*

Term	Definition
Axial coding	Axial coding refers to the process of linking the categories and properties together. (Creswell, 2007).
Critical Friends	According to Samaras (2011), critical friends are “trusted colleagues who seek support and validation of their research to gain new perspectives in understanding and reframing of their interpretations” (p. 5).
Entrepreneur	An entrepreneur is a person who builds something of perceived value around opportunities that they see. (Bolton & Thompson, 2004).
Free write activity	A free write activity type of reflective activity within self-study that allows for participants to respond in a structured, open-ended manner about their experiences. (Brandenburg, 2008).
Memoing	Memoing is a process where reflective logs are collected by a researcher to document the evolving thought process. (Ng & Hase, 2008).
Open coding	Open coding is when a researcher reads data line by line and identifies major categories to interpret the data. (Glaser, 1998).

Term	Definition
Practicum	A practicum is a course that is often in a specialized field of study. It is designed to give students supervised practical application of a previously or concurrently studied theory. Practicums are currently utilized in higher education by students in hospitality, education, social work, medical, and legal majors. (Birkhojf & Warjield, 1996)
Selective coding	Selective coding is when a researcher connects main ideas and uses them to create a “storyline” which will connect the codes together. (Creswell, 2007).
Wordle	Wordle is an online tool that allows an author to create word clouds, clouds of data created from the tags in his/her data analysis. (www.wordle.net, 2012).

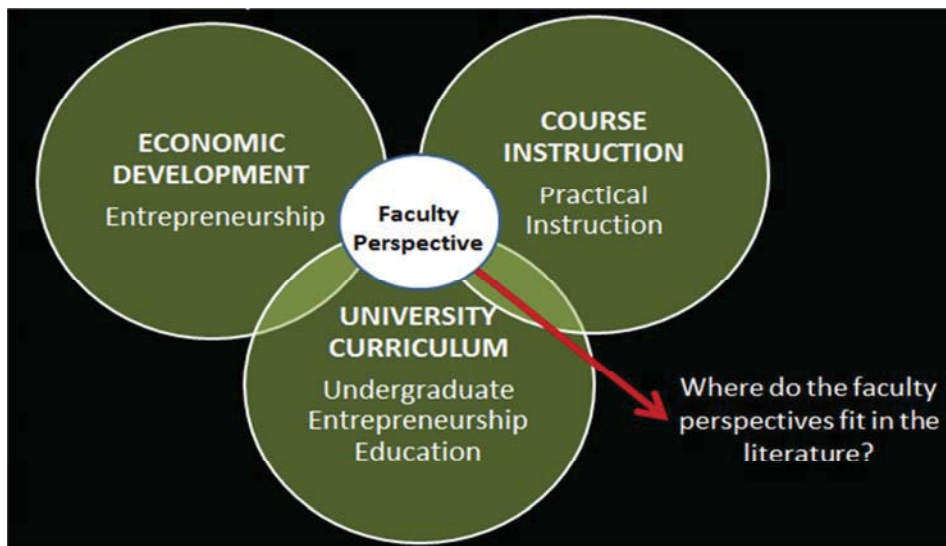
*\*Note.* For the purpose of encouraging clarity in this dissertation, the following terms are defined.



## CHAPTER 2 Theory and Literature Review

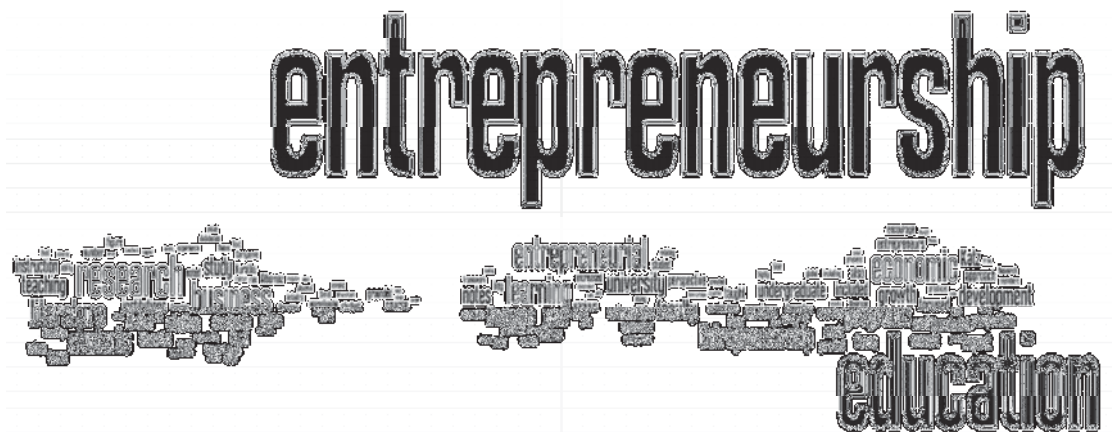
### Literature Review Design and Search

Van de Ven (2007) notes that a way to incorporate viewpoints from diverse perspectives into theory building is to review existing literature relating to a particular phenomenon. As shown in Figure 2, the conceptual map of literature for this study included economic development, university curriculum, and course instruction.



*Figure 2.* Faculty perspectives in the conceptual map of the literature.

According to Samaras (2011), a literature review is “invaluable for generating ideas” (p. 133). With regards to economic development, the search focused on program planning that would influence the university environment. The literature review for university curriculum focused on undergraduate entrepreneurship. The main focus was on entrepreneurship programs within business schools but included some multi-disciplinary programs. Finally, within course instruction at the university level, the focus was on practical instruction. This literature review also looked at teaching methodologies and course development. Figure 3 displays a Wordle of the key concepts from the literature review.



*Figure 3.* Wordle of key concepts in the literature.

To ensure a methodical approach, a wide variety of databases were searched to gather literature to review for this study:

1. EBSCO Host.
2. Education Research Complete.
3. ERIC (Education Resources Information Center).
4. JSTOR.
5. Google Scholar.
6. PsychINFO (APA PsycNET).
7. Dissertations and Theses Full Text.
8. Dissertations and Theses at George Mason University.
9. ProQuest Research Library, specifically the business and education modules.
10. Academic Search Complete.
11. LexusNexus Academic.
12. OECD iLibrary.
13. Business Course Complete.
14. Social Science Citation Index (SSCI).
15. ABI-Inform.
16. Business Abstracts with Full Text.
17. Emerald.
18. Intelligence+Full Text.
19. Factiva.

The search terms and their respective derivatives that were included in searches across the databases included:

- entrepreneurship,
- education;
- faculty;
- perspective;
- grounded theory;
- free write;
- economic development;
- business development;
- university funding;
- economic environment;
- entrepreneurship education growth;
- interviews;
- curriculum development;
- alumni funding;
- entrepreneurial networking;
- reflective practices;
- peer-evaluation;
- program evaluation;
- online learning;
- hybrid learning;

- entrepreneurial myth;
- lone ranger approach;
- apprenticeship;
- teaching debates;
- infrastructure;
- wealth-creation;
- measurements of success;
- dual approaches in teaching;
- experiential learning;
- economic impact;
- best practices;
- practical instruction; and
- small business development.

I searched within various entrepreneurship journals and publications that are ranked highly by fellow faculty members in the discipline including *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (ERD)*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice (ETP)*, *International Small Business Journal (ISBJ)*, *Journal of Business Venturing (JBV)*, *Journal of Small Business Management (JSBM)*, *Small Business Economics (SBE)*, and *Family Business Review (FBR)*. Additionally, I reviewed books and websites within each of the core literature areas; the ones used to inform this research are found in the References section. Figure 4 displays the concept areas addressed within each core literature area.

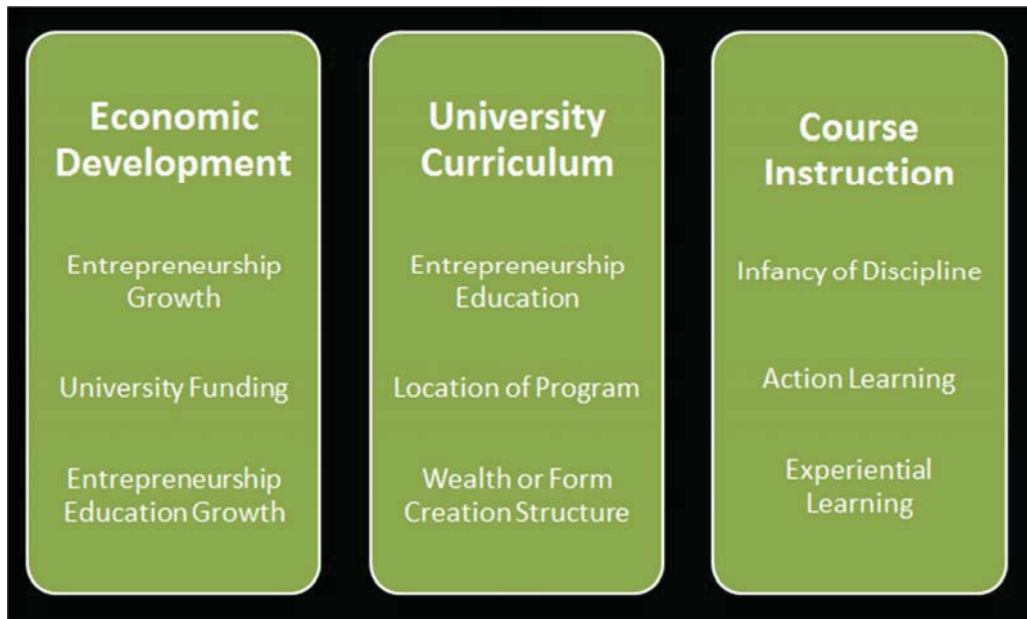


Figure 4. Literature areas.

### Economic Development

**Entrepreneurship growth.** The rise of entrepreneurship education can be attributed to the changing economic conditions around the world. Hage (1999) notes that innovation holds the key to continuity and growth of a company but entrepreneurship holds the key to economic growth in a country. Thompson (2010) contends that for a long time, research has focused on products and businesses rather than the people behind them. There is the call for academic institutions, such as universities, to focus research on the people, or stakeholders, within entrepreneurship education.

**University funding.** According to Breneman (2005), public universities are academic capitalists, a term coined by Leslie and Slaughter (1997). Public universities are driven to compete for funding for external research and private gifts. Entrepreneurship

courses are taught at almost every American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accredited institutions and are continuing worldwide growth (Katz, 2003).

When universities approach entrepreneurship education, the teaching of entrepreneurship is both a science and an art—the former relating to the functional skills required to launch and maintain a business start-up and the latter to the creative aspects of entrepreneurship, which are not explicitly teachable. Carlsson, Acs, Audretsch, and Braunerhjelm (2009) note that basic knowledge produced in academia may have little or no economic value. Yet, new opportunities in entrepreneurship have arisen through advances in both government policies and technical advances. Likewise, education may advance and foster entrepreneurship (Harris & Gibson, 2008). Growth in entrepreneurship has certainly been noted in the past few years.

**Entrepreneurship education growth.** The question of how to teach entrepreneurship on a national and global level comes up time and time again in research studies. The four main aspects of entrepreneurship include: (a) identifying and preparing potential entrepreneurs for start-ups; (b) enabling participants to prepare business plans for new ventures; (c) focusing on issues that are critical to the implementations of entrepreneurial projects such as market research, business financing, and legal issues; and (d) enabling the development of autonomous and risk-taking behavior (Katz, 2003). However, Henry, Hill, and Leitch (2005) note various difficulties associated with designing entrepreneurship programs. For example, due to environmental and funding variations in universities, courses are approached differently. In one university, alumni-funded entrepreneurship centers might own entrepreneurship curriculum development

and in another university, entrepreneurship courses might be taught across the curriculum.

Regardless of the approach taken for entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship education continues to be growing globally. Carlsson et al. (2009) document the shifts in values, preferences, and attitudes towards entrepreneurship at work. Katz (2003) noted that at the start of the new millennium, the number of entrepreneurship students increased by 50%. Entrepreneurship education has just gone through one of its periods of greatest growth.

Furthermore, Katz (2003) notes that global competition is having a tremendous impact on the ability to bring the best and brightest students to study at American universities. For American business school entrepreneurship professors, this means that they will face increasing competition for the brightest students, the best ideas, and the premiere venues for publication not only from entrepreneurship faculty around the world, but also from entrepreneurship faculty members in the office next door. It means that there will be a need to encourage and motivate others to recognize the motivational factors that impact students to excel and innovate. A self-reflective nature will be encouraged (Katz, 2003).

One difficulty in looking at global and national entrepreneurship education growth lies in the methods of measurement to evaluate these programs. The success of entrepreneurship programs can be evaluated by the number of students graduated but can more effectively be measured by the socioeconomic impact the students produce in the businesses they create. Issues such as the number of companies created, the number of



jobs created, the types of companies formed and the growth potential of the companies are essential for economic growth.

### **University Curriculum**

**Entrepreneurship education.** The first entrepreneurship course was taught at Harvard Business School in 1947 (Katz, 2003). The term “entrepreneurship education” is always evolving and has left many areas for research unexplored. Pilegaard, Moroz, and Neergaard (2010) highlight the challenges of change dynamics in university institutions that are implementing entrepreneurship education. The debate continues as to whether entrepreneurship can be taught despite credible studies by Kuratko, Ireland, and Covin (2005) that indicate that entrepreneurship can be taught. Katz (2003) also notes empirical research studies conclude that students can be taught entrepreneurial competencies.

Entrepreneurship begins with a nonlinear, continuous thought, and, therefore, institutions and infrastructure play a central role in defining how programs are incentivized in a system (Soskice, 1994). For example, Woollard (2010) created a theoretical framework of university entrepreneurship as an organizational process after distilling the work of Kuratko et al. (2005) and Clark (1998). This framework saw the entrepreneurial system as an input-process-output model.

**Location of programs.** Many studies have looked at the perspectives of alumni or business partners and their needs when recruiting graduating students from an entrepreneurship program. For example, Zahra, Newey, and Shaver (2011) studied the academic advisory boards’ contributions to education and learning within the confines of entrepreneurship centers. Mars, Slaughter, and Rhoades (2008) studied the student

perspective of entrepreneurship education in universities. However, the ability to be able to identify and document the value of entrepreneurship education and the faculty perspective has yet to be comprehensively studied.

There is a common theme of duality among the articles with respect to entrepreneurship education and business and university interactions. Research on entrepreneurship in disciplines outside the hard sciences is limited (Nelson, 2005). The research likewise identifies and explains a variety of approaches to entrepreneurship education. Schindehutte, Morris, and Allen (2006) highlight the idea that though entrepreneurial education can differ with goals, there are commonalities in terms of what entrepreneurs experience. Finally, Boschma (2004) noted that there is a need for entrepreneurial institutions to stimulate entrepreneurial thought and to set a good example.

**Wealth or form creation structure.** Two of the most widely recognized approaches to adopt in entrepreneurship education at the university level are a wealth-creation course approach or a form-creation course approach (Katz, 2003). While Katz was able to see the benefits of both course approaches, other researchers, such as Bernstein and Carayannis (2011), identified with one specific approach. Bernstein and Carayannis noted that entrepreneurship education seeks to address this lack of knowledge of entrepreneurship and to encourage new venture creation. Albornoz (2008) argues that entrepreneurs should learn about the stages involved in creating a new business.

Guile and Young (1998) comment on the existence of two alternative sociological perspectives on work and learning. One originates from industrial sociology and labor

education; it adopts a macro-sociological analysis. There is also the dual view point from the academic to the business world. According to Albornoz (2008), no company would want to invest in training its employees in marketable skills that will allow the employee to move onto another job more easily, especially during strong economic periods. It is not surprising that we find dueling approaches to execution of entrepreneurship education when there are dueling thoughts on the philosophies behind the discipline's existence.

### **Course Instruction**

**Infancy of discipline.** Universities in the United States are regarded as the pioneers in teaching entrepreneurship. The discipline of entrepreneurship is in its infancy; there is no structured framework of best practices as compared to other disciplines (Finkle, Soper, Fox, Cleveland, & Messing, 2009). Regardless of environment, facilitating innovative entrepreneurial venture creation is challenging (Shane, 2007).

Entrepreneurship education consists of an inductive process through which various ideas are incorporated and examined at each step in the learning curve (Honig, 2004). Across the searches on the best practices for undergraduate entrepreneurship education or entrepreneurship education in general, there are a wide range of opinions on functional approaches to teach students. Part of this debate exists among scholars as to whether teaching entrepreneurship is possible given current lecture-style teaching methods (Hynes, 1996; Sexton & Upton, 1988; Fiet, 2000). Currently, effective application of instruction does not distinguish between teaching mediums but instead solely is measured based on alignment with a program's mission, vision, or values.

**Action learning.** The push to move away from lecture-based instruction is dominant in the literature on undergraduate entrepreneurship education. Since the late 1980s, there has been a call for changes in business education curricula due to its lack of experiential activities (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Traditional teaching methods, like lecturing, are less effective in the discipline of entrepreneurship according to Gibb (2002) and Sogunro (2004). Learning through experience and action-learning is a main theme in entrepreneurship teaching (Gorman, Hanlon, & King, 1997). There are extensive studies on practical-based application in the entrepreneurship space. For example, Harkema and Schout (2008) suggest that practical implementation and a focus on student-centered learning means that students need to formulate their own needs and demands over the duration of a class. Furthermore, Smith, Barr, Barbosa, and Kickul (2008) reveal how social entrepreneurship prioritizes the value of experience.

**Experiential learning.** Experiential learning is a topic that is highly visible in entrepreneurial research. Experiential activities are a key component to entrepreneurial education as they link the academic to the practical (Kuratko et al., 2005). According to Wei and Guo (2010), experiential education comes in many forms including internships, study abroad, cooperative education, service-learning, and field experiences, such as intercollegiate debating or archaeological site work. Experiential education is usually a voluntary part of the curriculum, although for some university programs, it can be a mandatory, credit-bearing course of study.

Experiential learning could be effectively implemented into the curriculum. Albornoz (2008) notes that opportunity is the chance to introduce *innovative* (rather than

imitative) goods, services, or processes into an industry or economic marketplace in exchange of resources; he introduces the theory of entrepreneurial alertness which proposes that entrepreneurs have a special talent to identify opportunities. Similarly, Bernstein and Carayannis (2011) note that students' self-efficacy for having a successful career as an entrepreneur was found to be positively related to increased interest in the entrepreneurship major as well as the entrepreneurship elective. These results suggest that the more a student knows about entrepreneurship, the more confident he or she will be toward having a successful career as an entrepreneur, and hence he or she would have greater interest in entrepreneurship education. Since increased self-efficacy is a result of learning, increased undergraduate entrepreneurship enrollment could be achieved through prior entrepreneurship learning.

The importance of the construct of a laboratory and platform to encourage entrepreneurial education is noted in the research by Wei & Guo (2010). While active learning is often documented, the ideas of apprenticeship and mentorship are not thoroughly included in these documents. Apprenticeship systems provide strong and clear incentives (Soskice, 1994). There could be tremendous impact in the ability for a student to create value-producing ventures post-school if apprenticeship models were utilized.

Skills and knowledge building are core to curriculum development but the mediums of teaching are not researched in depth (Albonoz, 2008). Apprenticeship programs have been researched in depth as a paradigm for learning in many academic areas but have not been fully developed in entrepreneurship education. There is an opportunity to build entrepreneurship apprenticeship platforms to impact the industry.

This opportunity opens the door to research on how to bring new, alternative approaches to the table to help entrepreneurs define their core values. Impacting the industry will result from providing new mediums to encourage self-reflection and allow an entrepreneur to make decisions that not only align with personal values but also organizational values.

### **Gap in Literature: Faculty Perspectives**

This review of the literature confirms that there is a gap when studying the various stakeholder viewpoints of the ecosystem of undergraduate entrepreneurship education. The social network analysis by Bouwen and Steyaert (1990) calls for future research to focus on entrepreneurial motivations and understanding the connections between stakeholders in the pursuit of entrepreneurial endeavors. Béchard and Grégoire (2005) note the need to look at the intersection of research that focuses on entrepreneurship, management, and education. Kuratko et al. (2005) calls for entrepreneurship to seize leadership. While the economic development focus is highly documented due to its changing nature based on governmental administration terms in the United States, and the student and alumni base are studied to better understand the metrics to codify success in entrepreneurship instruction, the faculty member perspective is missing.

There is little evidence of qualitative studies that employ grounded theory and focus on the details of the perspectives of entrepreneurship faculty members. Nor are there studies that look at the popular rankings of top entrepreneurship programs in the United States as a baseline for research. Studies that incorporate faculty are much more

focused on a specific regional perspective. Laboskey (2006) documents the importance of understanding teacher agency in order to improve education. If we do not document their experiences and understandings, we cannot evolve and respond to the call from Katz (2003) that entrepreneurship education must evolve to avoid stagnation. The present study looks to fill a gap in the literature by exploring faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education using a qualitative grounded theory methodology.

## CHAPTER 3 Method

Chapter 3 discusses the methods used to collect the data to explore the research sub-questions. This chapter provides an overview of the research method, description of the setting and participants, procedures used for data collection, identification of interviewing relationships, and a description of the interview protocol. It also includes a discussion on how validity and reliability of this research were addressed and a summary of the data analysis process.

### **Overview**

The three sub-questions aimed to identify faculty members' perspectives on the purpose of entrepreneurship education, the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction, and the future priorities and/or goals in their own teaching. A qualitative research method was utilized. The rationale for this design lies in the fact that a qualitative design best accommodated the exploratory and descriptive nature of the three sub-questions of the core research question. Qualitative research focuses on the views and voices of participants, provides a description and interpretation of the phenomenon, and adds to existing literature (Creswell, 2007).

Moreover, qualitative methods uncover new insights, as they extract details about phenomena like feelings, thought processes, and emotions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative research uses multiple sources of data that are analyzed in a linear fashion



while working between themes at both a macro and micro level. In this study, a grounded theory was employed. The use of a grounded theory methodology allowed the generation of a working theory to inform administrators about faculty perspectives when designing undergraduate entrepreneurship programs. Grounded theory methodology also allowed for the flexibility to go into more detail interviews when merited while taking into consideration the context, setting, and each participant's personal frame of reference.

Grounded theory was developed by two social scientists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss and evolved from sociology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In creating the theory, Glaser and Strauss challenged the notion of the "grand theory," the idea that the purpose of social research is to uncover existing and universal explanations of social behavior. The term grounded theory reflects that theory is grounded in the actions and words of participants in a study. Grounded theory implies an ongoing interpretation of meaning that is derived from the interpretation of meaning from a group of participants around a specific topic. It identifies a phenomenon and looks to understand the underlying social patterns behind it (Benoliel, 1996).

Grounded theory is built on two core concepts including constant comparison and theoretical sampling. The characteristics of grounded theory include fit, understanding, generality, and control. Fit identifies whether the theory corresponds to real-world data. Understanding ensures clarity of the theory. Generality ensures that the theory is abstract enough to move beyond the specifics in the original study. Control focuses on whether the theory can be applied to produce real-world results. Constant comparison is a central component of grounded theory procedures (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Douglas (2004) proclaims that grounded theory is appropriate for entrepreneurship research as it incorporates the “psychological-cognitive-behavioral perspectives” (p. 62). There are also two main schools of thought regarding grounded theory: The Glaserian and The Straussian approaches. The overall differences in approaches are minimal (Stern, 1994). The main difference in approach relates to data analysis, where Glaser remained aligned with the initial version of grounded theory while Strauss outlined a systematic and prescribed approach (Cooney, 2010). Charmaz (2000) notes that the main point of distinction between the Glaserian and the Straussian approaches is whether or not verification should be an outcome of grounded theory.

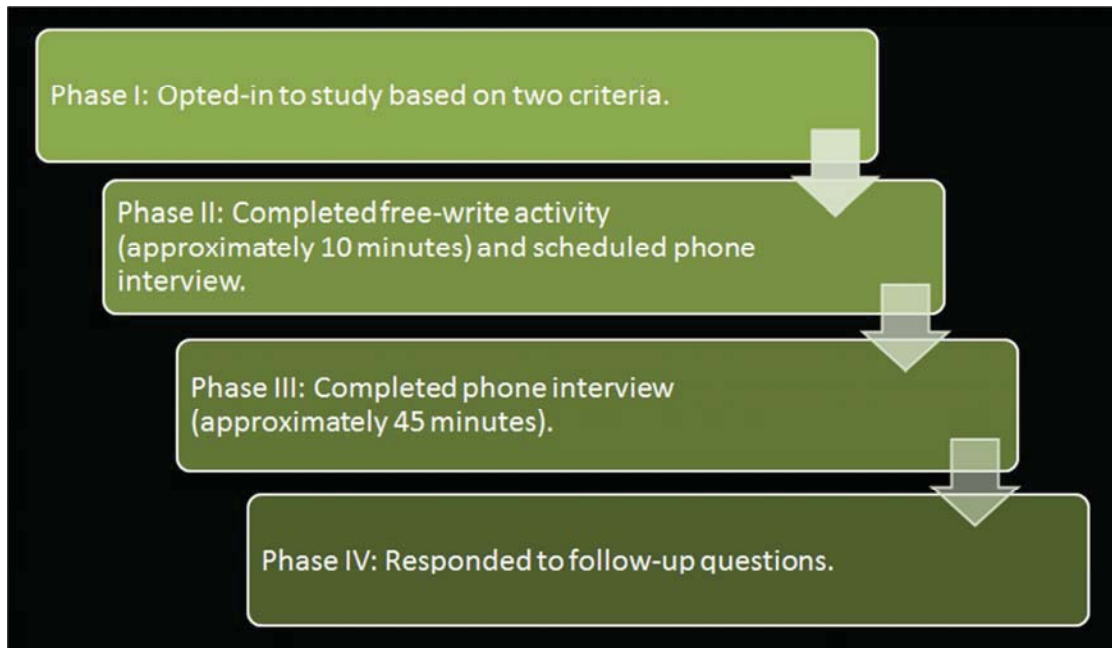
This research adopted a Straussian approach to grounded theory due to its clearer guidelines for data analysis, specifically for coding (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2006). In adopting the Straussian approach, coding is more rigorous and defined by three types of coding (open, axial, and selective). While Charmaz (2000) would argue that the prescribed data analysis structure is a constraint, researchers Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006) note that a Straussian approach results in a more dense and analytical style of research. This study approach allowed for the exploration of patterns and interrelationships between many categories versus isolating variables using the constant comparative method. A Straussian approach allowed broader environmental and contextual factors to be considered (Cooney, 2010). Douglas (2004) claims that qualitative research in entrepreneurship should include both the viewpoint from within and outside an organization. Since the Straussian approach allows for direct relationships

between researchers and participant, the interviews allowed the building of a more active relationship with the participants than in a Glaserian approach.

Before data collection began, George Mason University's Office of Research Integrity & Assurance approval process to conduct this research was completed in June 2012. The study classified under DHHS Exempt Category 2 (Appendix A).

### **Grounded Theory Method**

**Setting and participants.** In order to form the best working theory, theoretical sampling was employed (Creswell, 2007). A pool of 624 contacts was contacted via email to participate in the study in the months of August, September, October, and November in 2012. The full participatory process for the faculty participants can be seen in Figure 5. Each faculty member who agreed to participate went through each of the four phases over the course of their time participating in the study.



*Figure 5.* Four phases of participation.

The contacts were each affiliated with one of top 25 undergraduate entrepreneurship programs in the United States from Entrepreneur.com. Entrepreneur.com is part of a media company that has been informing the entrepreneurial community since 1973. The top 25 undergraduate entrepreneurship programs were based on annual results from surveys conducted by the Princeton Review of more than 2,000 schools in 2011. The listing of these universities can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

*2011 Top 25 Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Programs by Entrepreneur.com*

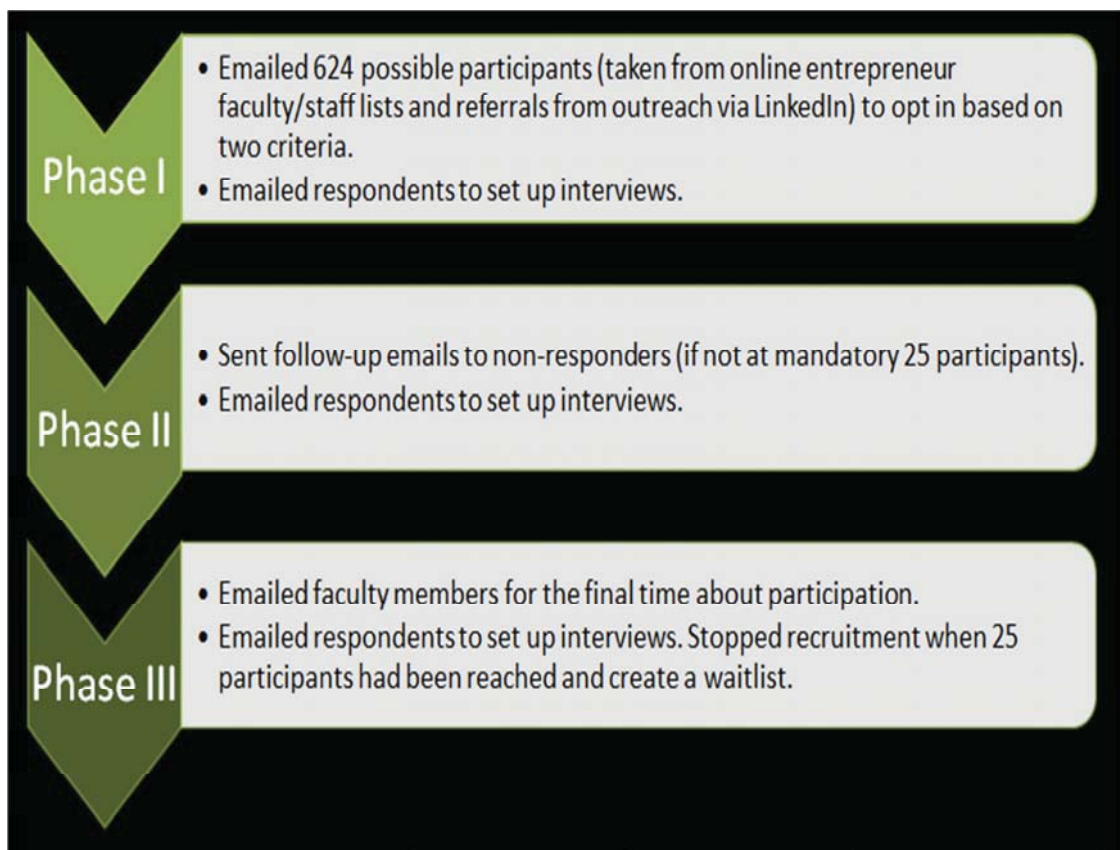
1	University of Houston	Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship
2	Babson College	Arthur M. Blank Center for Entrepreneurship
3	Baylor University	Baylor Entrepreneurship Program
4	Syracuse University	Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprise
5	University of Southern California	University of Southern California
6	Washington University in St. Louis	Skandalaris Center for Entrepreneurial Studies
7	Brigham Young University (UT)	Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology
8	University of Arizona	McGuire Entrepreneurship Program
9	Northeastern University	Entrepreneurship & Innovation
10	University of Oklahoma	Center for Entrepreneurship
11	Temple University	Innovation & Entrepreneurship Institute
12	University of Dayton	Entrepreneurial Leadership
13	Drexel University	Laurence A. Baiada Center for Entrepreneurship in Technology
14	University of Missouri-Kansas City	Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
15	Miami University	Miami Institute for Entrepreneurship
16	University of Utah	Pierre Lassonde Entrepreneur Center
17	DePaul University	DePaul Entrepreneurship Program
18	University of Maryland, College Park	Mtech & Dingman Center for Entrepreneurship
19	Belmont University	Center for Entrepreneurship
20	Bradley University	Entrepreneurship (Department of Business Management and Administration)
21	Texas Christian University	Neeley Entrepreneurship Program
22	City University of New York--Baruch College	Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management
23	University of Wisconsin-Madison	Weinert Center for Entrepreneurship
24	Oklahoma State University	School of Entrepreneurship
25	Xavier University (OH)	Xavier-Sedler Family Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The names and contact information for these potential faculty members were taken from the public listings of staff and faculty members displayed on the respective university websites starting on April 15, 2012. The individuals in this pool represented a variety of classifications of employment and diversity in previous experiences in entrepreneurship and university environments. Three rounds of updates to this faculty list were completed between August 2012 and November 2012 by reviewing the university websites and leveraging referrals from LinkedIn outreach. Not all of the contacts that were emailed from the universities met the two screening criteria: 1) being a faculty member that teaches entrepreneurship; and (b) having at least one-year of service in the respective programs at the university.

Of the contacts affiliated from the ranked entrepreneurship programs, a target sampling of 25 was employed for the two-phased study, including participation in a free-activity and phone interview. In qualitative research, there are no strict guidelines for sample size (Patton, 1990). For grounded theory research, sample size guidelines have ranged from 15-20 participants (Creswell, 2002) to 20-30 participants (Creswell, 1998). In this study, the sample size was 24. According to Maxwell (2005), purposeful selection is a strategy utilized to pick participants in order to get answers more specifically and effectively. Purposeful selection is also called criterion-based sampling (Preissle, Millroy, & LeCompte, 1992). Purposeful sampling allowed me to establish particular comparisons about entrepreneurship education among the ranked schools (Bickman & Rog, 2008). A maximum of two faculty members from respective programs from each of

the 25 universities on the list were allowed to participate in the interviews in order to diversify the data set.

Participant recruitment occurred in three phases which is shown in Figure 6. The purposeful sample of 24 participants fell within the guidelines noted by Creswell in both 1998 and 2002; it allowed the opportunity for each university on the 2011 rankings to be included in the research.



*Figure 6.* Participant recruitment process in three phases.

***Phase I of recruitment.*** First, I emailed the 624 contacts on the entrepreneur faculty/staff lists to self-select for participation based on the selection criteria of (a) being a faculty member that teaches entrepreneurship; and (b) having at least one-year of service in the respective programs at the university. In this recruitment email (Appendix B), I included a copy of the consent form for participant review (Appendix C). I followed-up via email with respondents to set up interviews (Appendix D). I confirmed interviews for each week starting in September 2012. I took on participants weekly until I had 25 participants signed up. I created a waiting list for universities that had more than two willing participants that met both criteria for the study (Appendix E). I did not have to use a wait list until phase three of my outreach. The names on the waitlist were documented in the order in which the participants expressed interest. If I needed to use names on the list, I would have selected participants based on the order of the participant's names on the waitlist. Since I needed more participants after phase 1, I moved to phase 2 of the participant recruitment process.

***Phase II of recruitment.*** During phase 2 of the participant recruitment process, I called the potential participants who have not responded to my first follow-up recruitment email (Appendix F). I also confirmed interviews for willing participants via email and via phone. Since I needed more participants after phase 2, I moved to phase 3 of the participant recruitment process.

***Phase III of recruitment.*** During phase 3 of the participant recruitment process, I followed-up via email (Appendix G) to all the potential participants who had not responded to my initial email, follow-up call, or follow-up email. I followed-up with



respondents to set up interviews via email until I had 25 participants. In the end, I had 25 participants but had to discard one interview; I found out via follow-up questions that one participant had not been affiliated with the university program for one year, one of the two criteria for participation in the study.

In total, 24 faculty members from 16 of the 25 universities on the list participated. A map of the schools incorporated in the study can be seen in Figure 7. The number of faculty participants from each of the universities and the locations of the respective universities incorporated in this study can be found in Table 2.



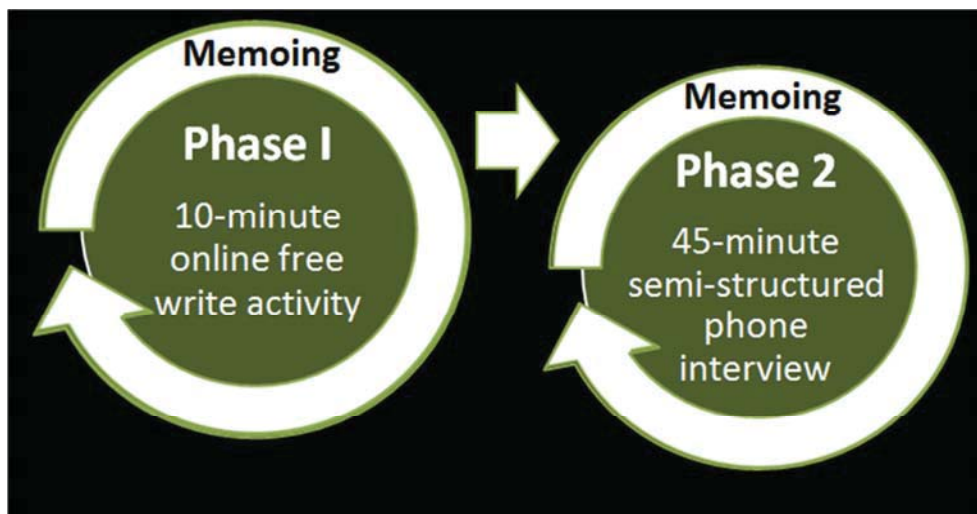
*Figure 7.* Map of participants by university location.

Table 2

*Faculty Participation List by University and Location*

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>City, State</b>
2	University of Houston	Houston, Texas
2	Babson College	Wellesley, Massachusetts
1	Baylor University	Waco, Texas
2	Syracuse University	Syracuse, New York
1	University of Southern California	Los Angeles, California
1	Brigham Young University	Provo, Utah
2	University of Arizona	Tucson, Arizona
2	University of Oklahoma	Norman, Oklahoma
2	Drexel University	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
1	University of Missouri-Kansas City	Kansas City, Missouri
2	University of Utah	Salt Lake City, Utah
1	DePaul University	Chicago, Illinois
1	University of Maryland	College Park, Maryland
2	Belmont University	Nashville, Tennessee
1	City University of New York--Baruch College	New York, New York
1	Oklahoma State University	Stillwater, Oklahoma

**Data Collection Procedures.** The data collection followed qualitative grounded theory methods and took place over a five month period within 2012 in two phases as shown in Figure 8. Interviews were conducted around the schedule of faculty members.



*Figure 8.* Data collection process in two phases.

After confirming the date of the interview, a URL (an online link to access a resource on the internet) to a free write activity was sent to each participant via email to be completed before the interview date (Appendix H).

The free write aligned with Kroll and Laboskey (1996) call to ask how teachers construct meaning in their content area. A free write is a type of qualitative data collection that asks a participant to respond to a type of phenomenon in an unstructured fashion. A free write activity facilitates the authority of experience (Brandenburg, 2008). It allows for the insider perspective to be identified (Brandenburg, 2009). Participants

record anything that comes to their mind without a critical component, allowing the participant to be free in thought regardless of correct spelling or grammar (Bolton, 1999).

The free writes were set up as a form on Smartsheet, an online project management tool that can be used for the free write collection via a secure online form (Appendix I). Smartsheet is a secure place where the responses were stored. Access to each sheet was controlled. Each participant was set up with access to a Smartsheet account in order to view their data at any time. No individually identifiable information was collected, disclosed or published, and all results presented as aggregate, summary data using the Carnegie Classifications. Per the consent form, participants, upon request, had access to their transcripts for accuracy via unique access to Smartsheet. For coded identifiable data, a code was used in place of a participant's name on both the free write and the audio recording. Through the use of an identification key which only I had access to, I was able to link the free write and audio recording to the respective participant's identity.

Each participant was asked to click on the URL of the online submission in the email to complete the free write activity. Participants were asked to electronically return the free writes within one week of the scheduled interview date if possible. The free write was expected to take a participant no more than 10 minutes. The suggested 10 minute timeframe was noted in the directions of the free write. The intent of the free write was to encourage a preliminary brainstorming process and therefore did not require a large time commitment. The brainstorming process provided an opportunity to learn more about the participants and was necessary in the creation of the outline for the semi-structured

interview questions. Ten minutes provided each participant approximately three minutes to craft a response for each statement. The participants were asked to complete the following three statements that directly aligned with the three sub-questions:

1. The purpose of entrepreneurship education
2. The roles of theory and practice in my instruction
3. My future priorities and goals of my courses

Concurrent with this initial phase, I started a memoing process to document my reflections on theory emergence throughout the review of the free writes. Memoing is an analytic strategy that is employed to assist in making sense of interviews (Murphy, 2009). Memos are a record of a researcher's analysis (Piantanida, Tananis, & Grubs, 2004). There are four goals to memoing: (a) they can develop ideas and code; (b) they should develop in an unconstrained fashion; (c) they should be stored centrally; and (d) they should be sortable (Glaser, 1978). To comply with the goals of memoing, they were collected and stored via an online form created on Smartsheet (Appendix J). Smartsheet allowed for sorting of the data. The memos stored in Smartsheet contributed empirical evidence to the data set (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Phase 2 of the data collection occurred on a rolling basis. The data collection began two weeks after each completed free write was received. I sent out emails to reconfirm the dates of the phone interviews and provided the respective call-in information. Calls took place at all times and days of the week based on the participant's preferred schedule. Upon confirmation, I completed a semi-structured, one-on-one interview that took an average of 45 minutes with each participant via phone. The audio

calls were recorded using software from FreeConferenceCall.com. Each user was sent the telephone number and access code prior to the interview. After the interview, I downloaded the audio file from FreeConferenceCall.com and migrated the files to Smartsheet. Participants had the ability to review the audio files from their interview via user-specific access to Smartsheet upon request. This review served as a member check and was optional for participants. The same identifier was used instead of names to ensure confidentiality of the participant files. I continued the memoing process to document my reflections as I reviewed through each interview.

**Interviewing relationship.** Prior to the interview, I did not know any of the participants. To foster the creation of a cordial conversation, I introduced myself as a doctoral candidate at George Mason University and a Fulbright Grantee to Norway. I thanked the participant for his or her involvement and provided an overview of how the 45-minute semi-structured phone interview would be utilized. I then reviewed the purpose of the interview, to explore faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education, before starting the questions.

**Interview protocol.** The average 45-minute semi-structured phone interview was broken down into three sections. The three sections related to personal and demographic information, program and university background information, and the three specific research sub-questions. The questions were carefully thought out in order to capture a holistic view of the participants, the respective university profiles, and faculty member perceptions on entrepreneurship education. Questions were taken from the ranking criteria published in the Entrepreneur.com's 2011 rankings and expanded to incorporate a

tighter alignment to the three research sub-questions. The intent was to be able to have data collected that would allow university administrators to easily identify with the research based on common characteristics. The questions were also formed with the hope to encourage administrators to compare and contrast their university programs with others in the study.

A semi-structured approach was utilized to allow the participants to create detailed responses in selected portions of the interview. In the semi-structured interviews, the outline of questions guided the interview. It also allowed for flexibility to encourage the participant to elaborate on specific issues as needed.

The protocol was created in advance in order to ensure that the phone interview time was effectively utilized and that each participant was provided the opportunity to comment on the same questions throughout the data collection process in 2012 (Appendix K). Creswell (2013) proclaims that detailed thick description adds to the accuracy of a study. This protocol served as a disciplinary measure and helped ensure consistency in content and duration of the interviews. At the end of all the data collection, 1,083 minutes or 18 hours were spent on phone interviews. Each of the 24 interviews averaged 45.12 minutes but the range in time spent on the phone for an interview was between 19 minutes to 101 minutes.

**Validity and reliability.** I used various methods to ensure validity in this qualitative research. First, I employed the constant comparative method while studying the data. As an inductive technique, data was concurrently collected and analyzed.

Constant comparative analysis looks for variations in the collected data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

I also incorporated a member check process to ensure credibility in the data. Member checking helps ensure accuracy of the findings by taking the findings to an outside source to check-code themes in the data. Member checking is a form of methodological rigor and a technique used for validation (Creswell, 2013). This member checking process took place in phase 3 of the data analysis after all three methods of coding had been completed. All participants had the opportunity to check their own audio files and transcriptions via unique access to the respective files on Smartsheet on request. The participants were able to provide feedback during the process using the discussion tool on Smartsheet. This form of consensual validation looked for agreements in analysis between me and the participants (Eisner, 1991).

Second, I ensured that the memoing process occurred each day that I worked on the project to ensure that my subjectivity was noted to ensure accountability for my thoughts in the process (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). I worked on providing clarification on any of my biases through these memos. I did not draw final conclusions quickly but continuously interpreted the incoming data.

The interviews were transcribed with reliability. I hired an outside company that provides transcription services to complete the transcriptions. I read the transcriptions carefully and corrected any errors from the transcriber based on the recordings from the phone interviews. I selected this transcription company based on its track record with academic transcriptions for universities, pricing, and efficient turn-around time. I



required the transcription company to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect the confidentiality of the participants. This NDA was stored on Smartsheet. The files to transcribe were also saved on Smartsheet and access to the recordings and transcriptions by the outside company was removed at the end of the completed transcription process.

I was also transparent in my data collection process with the raw data and the coding process. By sharing the codes with the participants and a critical friend, I was able to routinely check-code my data analysis. The critical friend selected to participate in the member check process was a fellow doctoral student. This doctoral student focuses her research on innovation and completes her research using mixed-methods approaches. Her educational background, experience, and interest in the topic lent itself to being a strong fit for analyzing my codes. According to Samaras (2011), critical friends are “trusted colleagues who seek support and validation of their research to gain new perspectives in understanding and reframing of their interpretations” (p. 5).

**Data analysis.** Data analysis took place in three phases, as shown in Figure 9.

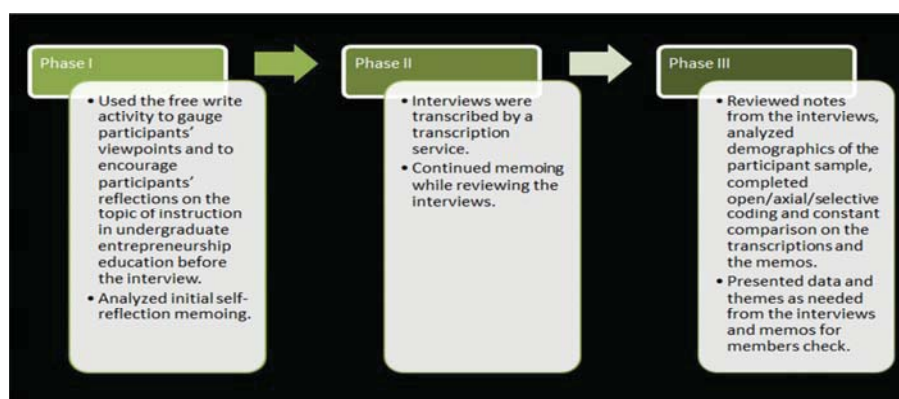


Figure 9. Data analysis in three phases.

*Phase I of data analysis.* First, I used the free write activity to gauge each participant's viewpoints and to encourage reflection on the topic of instruction in undergraduate entrepreneurship education before each phone interview. I printed out the free writes in order to use them for data analysis in phase I and phase III. I also completed a process of conceptual memoing, capturing my ideas in a running document that noted my thoughts on the emerging working theory throughout the duration of the project.

*Phase II of data analysis.* After the interviews, I received the interviews transcribed in phase 2. The outside company that I hired completed the transcriptions in a two month period in 2012. The documents were sent to the outside company in an MP3 format. The transcriptions were completed as Microsoft Word documents. I continued to analytically memo while reviewing the interviews to keep a trail of my reflections and analyses on the emergence of a working theory. During this phase, I also analyzed the demographic background information that I received from the interviews. Figure 10 display the six-step process I used to review the transcriptions.

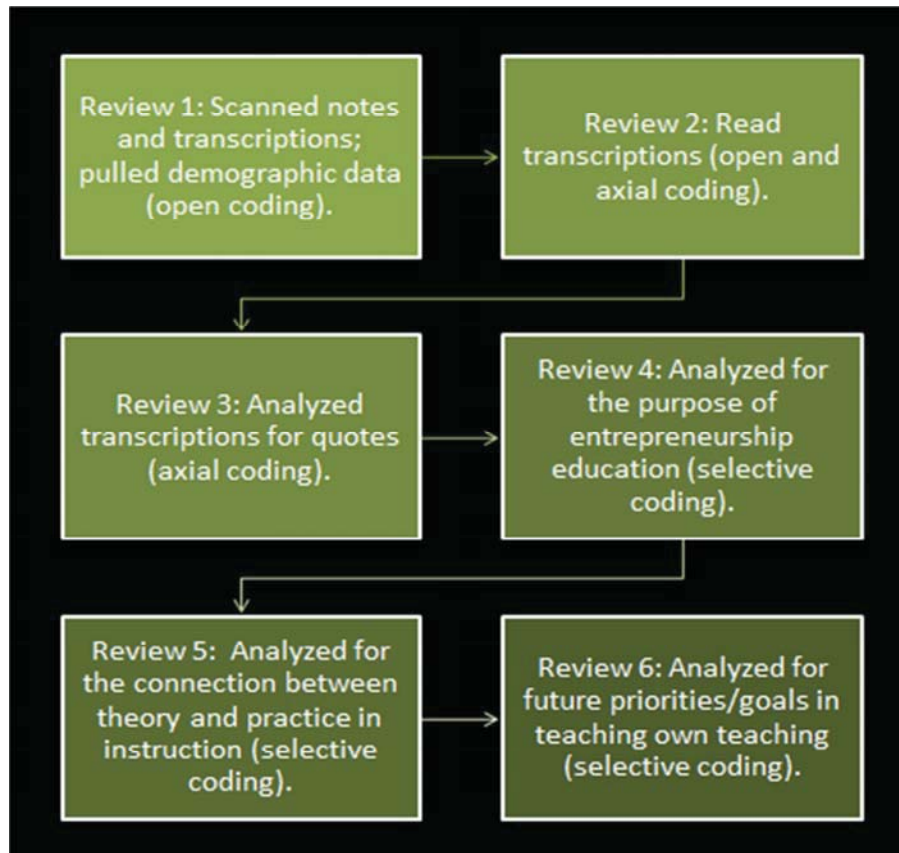


Figure 10. Six step transcription review process.

Of the 24 participants, six of the participants were female and 18 were male. The average age of the participants in the study was 52. The participants had taught an average of 17 years and specifically taught entrepreneurship for an average of 9 years. I looked at the highest completed education levels of the 24 participants. Figure 11 shows the breakdown of the participants by their highest level of education.

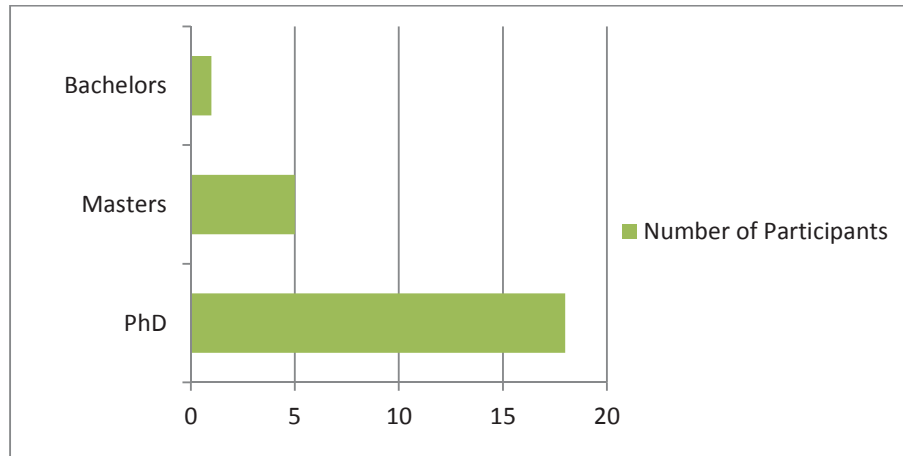


Figure 11. Participants by education level.

The previous experiences of the participants in the study were analyzed. As shown in Figure 12, 19 of the participants either have owned or continue to own an entrepreneurial venture. Some of the types of ventures discussed included consultancies, cleaning-supply companies, interior design companies, and printing companies.

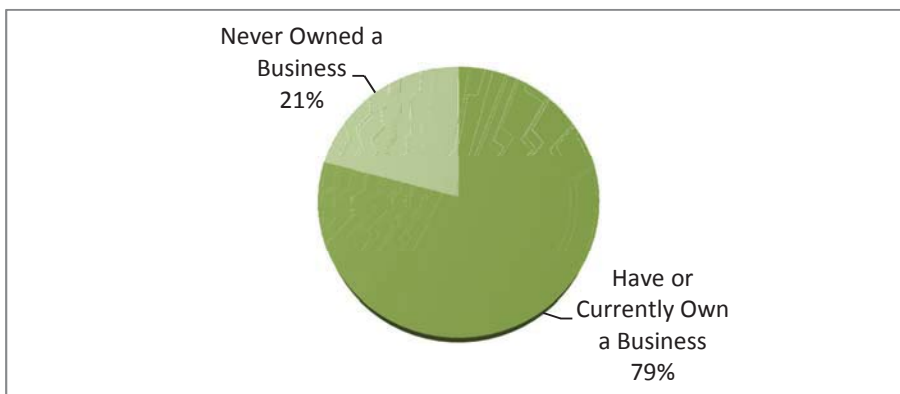


Figure 12. Participant business ownership.

The academic experiences of the participants in the study were analyzed. As shown in Figure 13, 18 of the participants have published on entrepreneurship. Some examples of the publications noted during interviews included *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice (ETP)*, *International Small Business Journal (ISBJ)*, *Journal of Business Venturing (JBV)*, and *Journal of Small Business Management (JSBM)*.

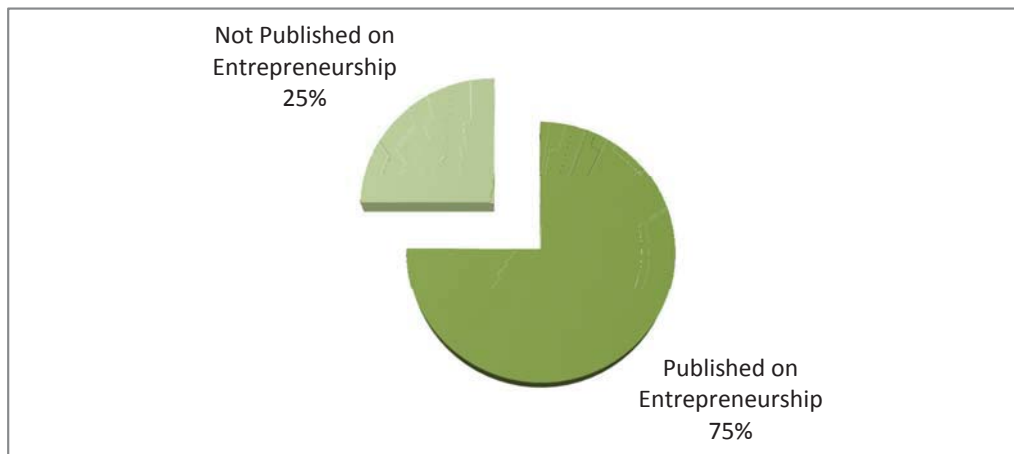


Figure 13. Participant publications on entrepreneurship.

As shown in Figure 14, 15 of the participants participate in student organizations. This faculty member participation incorporates a variety of means of engaging with the students in organizations. Some examples that were provide included mentoring, faculty sponsorship, or judging business plan or pitch competitions around campus.

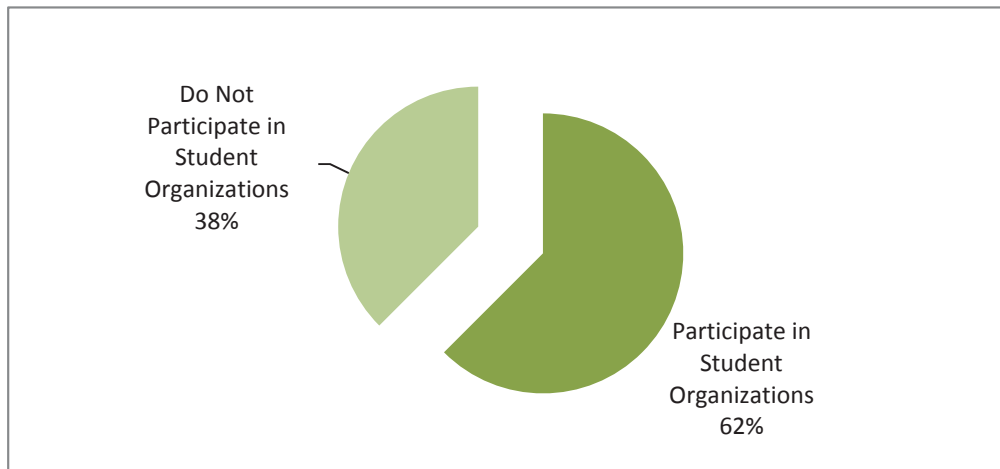


Figure 14. Participant participation in organizations.

Out of the 24 participants in the study, 22 of them noted that they participate in organizations for their own professional development and networking. Some organizations that were mentioned repeatedly included the Academy of Management (AOM) and United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE). Only two participants did not participate in professional development—the reasons noted were due to of lack of interest and a lack of need for networking due to an already saturated network.

**Phase III of data analysis.** During phase 3, the transcripts, the free writes, and the notes from my calls were reviewed for content to ensure they aligned with the audio recording. I then completed open coding, axial coding, and selective coding based on the transcribed interviews. For the interviews and free writes, codes, or descriptive word gatherings, were used so summarize data. Coding allows a researcher to fracture the data, ensuring that a transition from the empirical level to the conceptual level to be able to

explain the data. While open coding, the transcripts were read line by line and major categories were identified to interpret the data (Glaser, 1998). Key words were highlighted and codes were written in the margins while reading each transcription. Open coding ensures that all data is reviewed and taken into consideration; it ensures a level of focus by the researcher. The result is a rich, dense theory which gets stronger with the synergy of the connection between the concurrent open coding and memoing process (Glaser, 1992). According to Glaser (1978), if a researcher skips the memoing process, the researcher is not completing grounded theory. At the end of the open coding process, a log of all of the codes that I collected from the data was compiled.

In axial coding, the categories were connected to make them more abstract. According to Samaras (2001), categories can be retitled once they have been connected together to form more concrete thoughts. Axial coding essentially happens concurrently with open coding. Axial coding refers to the process of linking the categories and properties together (Creswell, 2007). Axial coding requires a combination of thinking—both inductive and deductive. The codes created during axial coding can be shown in Table 3 in the order in which they appeared in the review of the transcriptions.

The final coding stage in the research was the selective coding stage. At the selective coding stage, data is saturated around core variables. Modifications to the core variables occur over time to clarify the selected codes that were created. In selective coding, main ideas are developed and used them to create a “storyline” which connected the codes to the three research sub-questions (Creswell, 2007). The selective codes can be

seen in Table 4. Manual coding and constant comparison method were employed to check for appropriate alignment of codes into larger categories.

This process concluded when theoretical saturation occurred. According to Bowen (2008), researchers should ensure they are explicit in the steps to confirm data and theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation is what distinguishes grounded theory from constant comparison. Theoretical saturation occurs when no new concepts are emerging from the data, in other words an interchangeability of indicators is achieved. This interchangeability ensures the transferability of the theory to other areas (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical saturation is core to naturalistic inquiry (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After analyzing the 24 interviews in this research, no new concepts were found.



Table 3

*Axial Codes*

Opportunity	Exploit	Pursue	Innovative	No barriers
Expose	Not context specific	Personal nature	Economic development	Align stakeholders
Demystify	Emancipation	Realistic job preview	Long ranger	Creative
Predictive	Logic	Mindset training	Create	Definition
Focus	Program evaluation	Reflect	Hybrid models	Funding-center models
Challenges	Limitations	Seriousness of domain	Pracademics	Academicians
Resource competition	Long term	Short term	Ranking tradeoff of prestige and rank	Class size
Across disciplines	Admin changes	Marketing bandwagon	Student satisfaction	Books
Relevancy	Outreach	Touch market	Connections	Field interviews
Decision making	Concept journal	Apprenticeship	Internship	Videos
Newspapers	Speakers	Game simulators	Business plan	Model
Case	Cultural	Journaling	Capture ideas	Encourage
Motivate	Peer	Mentor	Networking	Experiential
Fresh Content	VC	Technology	Writing	Leadership
Economic trends	Hands dirty	Outside classroom	Millennials	Credibility
Personal	Discussion			

Table 4

*Selective Codes*

Research Sub-Question 1	Research Sub-Question 2	Research Sub-Question 3
Opportunity	Relevancy	Reflection
Expose	Reflection	Peer
Economic Development	Outreach	Student Focused
Demystify		Experiential

Creative-Predictive Logic		Content
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Data and core categories were then presented to a critical friend, a peer academic contact, who check-coded several samplings of my full data set. Feedback from the check coding is displayed in Table 5. In serving as a check-coder for validity, the critical friend reviewed the themes and provided feedback.

Table 5

*Check Coding*

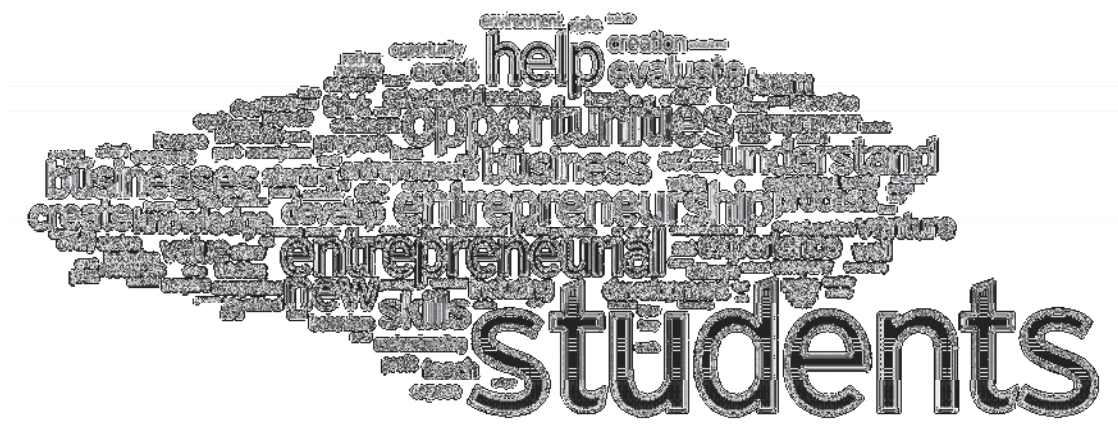
Opportunity	Relevancy	Reflection (duplicate idea?)
Expose (negative connotation, meant to be?)	Reflection	Peer
Economic Development	Outreach	Student Focused
Demystify		Experiential
Creative-Predictive Logic		Content
*explain more about demystify (maybe explain?)		*content can also mean resource?
*reveal might be better than expose (positive connotation to align with text from the interviews)		

In this phase, Wordles were also used to examine the text and the themes in a graphical format after the text analysis was completed. Samaras (2011) notes that alternative forms of qualitative data collection, like a Wordle for example, allows a researcher to conduct alternate meanings in their work. Wordle is an online tool that allows me to create word clouds, clouds of data created from the tags in my data analysis (McNaught & Lam, 2010). Word clouds enabled the viewing of data from another visual

fashion to aid in identifying additional connections when revisiting text analysis.

According to Samaras (2011), word clouds give the researcher the opportunity to also “examine them in space” (p. 210). The final stage of analyzing the data in a grounded theory approach requires pulling together of all the concepts in order to explain a phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Figure 15 is a Wordle of the text from the free write responses to the first sub-question, what is the purpose of entrepreneurship education? Figure 16 is a Wordle of the text from the free write responses to the second sub-question, what is the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction? Figure 17 is a Wordle of the text from the free write responses to the third sub-question, what are the future priorities and/or goals in their own teaching? Finally, Figure 18 is a Wordle of all of the transcriptions from the interviews.



*Figure 15.* Wordle of free write responses to research sub-question 1- what is the purpose of entrepreneurship education.

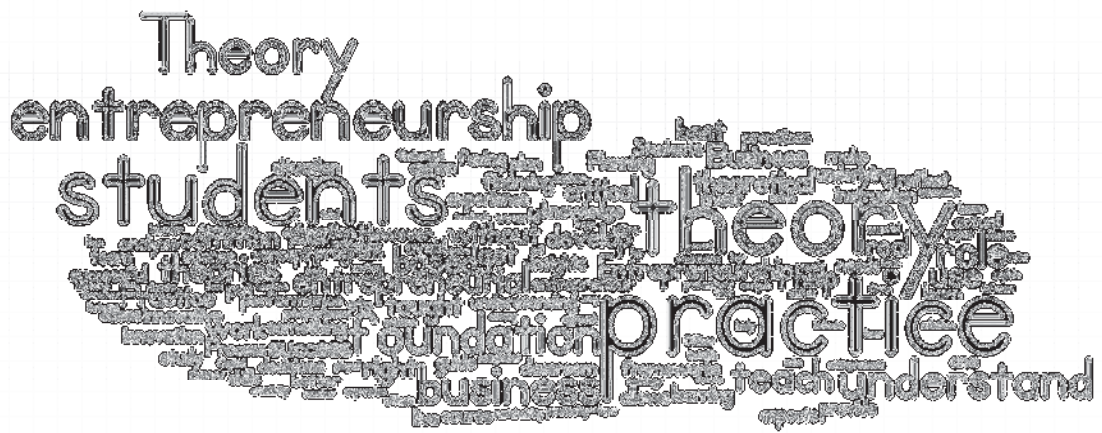


Figure 16. Wordle of free write responses to research sub-question 2-what is the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction.

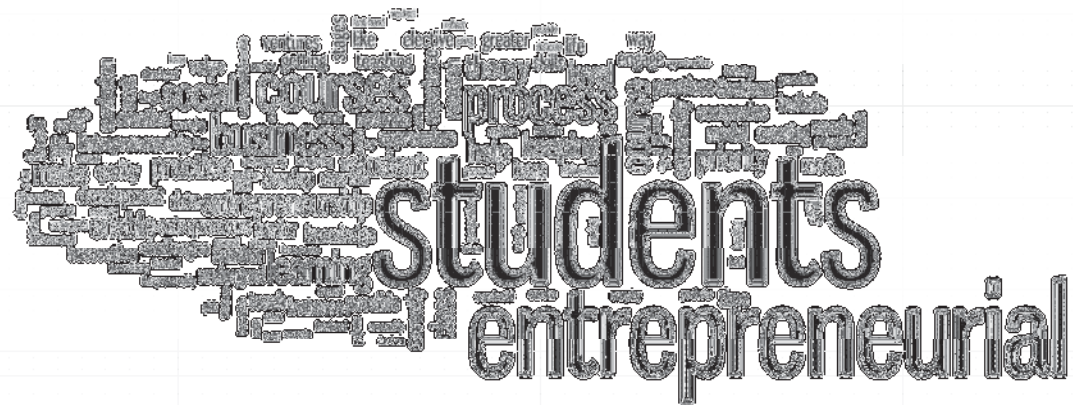


Figure 17. Wordle of free write responses to research sub-question 3- what are the future priorities and/or goals in their own teaching.



Figure 18. Wordle of all text from transcriptions.

Finally, the themes were used to create an acrostic poem to highlight the findings from the three sub-questions. This acrostic poem can be seen in Figure 19. The acrostic poem encompasses the working theory which encourages administrators to reveal the value of entrepreneurship and engage students when defining and designing undergraduate entrepreneurship curriculum.

Reveal and Engage Working Theory

**Q1: REVEAL**

**R**evealing the value of entrepreneurship  
**E**ncouraging economic development  
**V**alidating the entrepreneurial lifestyle  
**E**xplaining the myth of entrepreneurship  
**A**rticulating how to identify and exploit opportunity  
**L**inking creative and predictive logic

**Q2: AND**

**A**ssuring relevancy  
**N**urturing reflection  
**D**riving outreach

**Q3: ENGAGE**

**E**ncouraging peer-evaluation  
**N**urturing reflection  
**G**uiding experiential learning  
**A**dapting to students  
**G**enerating networks  
**E**mbracing new content

*Figure 19.* Reveal and engage working theory acrostic poem.

## CHAPTER 4 Findings

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the research on the three sub-questions of faculty members' perspectives on entrepreneurship education: (a) what is the purpose of entrepreneurship education; (b) what is the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction; and (c) what are the future priorities and/or goals in their own teaching.

### **Findings on Research Sub-Question 1: The Purpose of Entrepreneurship Education**

The research explored faculty perspectives on the purpose of entrepreneurship education. Respondents' reporting varied. However, the responses were able to be clustered based on themes found in the coding process. One faculty member summed up the feedback: "There is no standard. We find no common standard. Some people say well, that is just the nature of entrepreneurship" (Participant 21, Public University, Midwest). The findings on the purpose of entrepreneurship education can be grouped into six core facets: (a) revealing the value of entrepreneurship; (b) encouraging economic development; (c) validating the entrepreneurial lifestyle; (d) explaining the myth of entrepreneurship; (e) articulating how to identify and exploit opportunity; and (f) linking creative and predictive logic.

**Revealing the value of entrepreneurship.** Throughout the phone interviews, faculty members talked about the purpose of entrepreneurship education as revealing the value of entrepreneurial thinking and skills. Many of the faculty members saw

entrepreneurship as a subject that cultivated entrepreneurial thinking, a key to innovation. A faculty member commented that, “I love the distinction between innovation and entrepreneurship...I think they are both important but they are distinct” (Participant 1, Private Non-For-Profit University, Midwest). The interest and willingness to define and bound the term entrepreneurship was raised in multiple interviews. Participant 1, Public, Northeast noted that “entrepreneurs are always innovators” and that “entrepreneurs literally are managers of innovation.” Another faculty member merged the ideas of entrepreneurship and innovation together in a metaphor:

I think entrepreneurship is an umbrella; innovation is something underneath that. It's a part of entrepreneurship. If you are a successful entrepreneur, certainly it entails a lot more than having maybe product and systems and so forth.

(Participant 6, Private Non-For-Profit University, Southwest)

The push to reveal the value of entrepreneurship is also rooted in the perspective that entrepreneurship is a natural part of the human experience. One faculty member noted that “I think entrepreneurship is just a critical, fundamental expression of human agency” (Participant 13, Public, Midwest). As such, some faculty members noted that the number of business starts was not important as a result of entrepreneurship education. One noted that we are “more interested in how students think about their capabilities...we assess on confidence in entrepreneurial skills” (Participant 24, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast). This mindset revolves around the idea of realization—that entrepreneurship should encourage a mindset of an entrepreneur not create an entrepreneur. Another faculty member explained:



I am very concerned when I hear about entrepreneurship education that is trying to create entrepreneurs. I think that is disastrous and will certainly backfire in the long-run both for student outcomes and for social economic welfare outcomes.

(Participant 15, Public, Northeast)

Growing skills is also a part of the preparation in educating an entrepreneur. To run a venture and sustain growth through varying economic and political climates, an entrepreneur must have skills in multiple domains such as marketing, finance, human resources, sales, and law that develop over time through experience and education. One faculty member noted that, “entrepreneurship should be about the organization, whether that is a business or a non-profit organization” (Participant 2, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast). Another shared that:

The central part of it is to prepare students to create an organization, whether it be for profit or non-profit or for whatever purpose...and by preparing them, I do mean both the content-based aspect of learning and the emotional elements that are required. (Participant 23, Private Non-For-Profit University, Midwest)

Another perspective on teaching entrepreneurship relates to teaching human interaction and value creating skills. Entrepreneurship can have a unifying impact on students to build community. Entrepreneurship can educate people on how to cross-boundaries in education due to increasing diversity in the classroom. This increasing classroom diversity is defined as a mixing of disciplines, ideas, and experience. It was stated that:

I think entrepreneurship is a critical sort of way to reach across boundaries, for both students to see themselves working across boundaries with others and for

them also to see beyond the boundaries of their own discipline that they are still for the most part being trained in. (Participant 15, Public, Northeast)

Entrepreneurship education adds value to students regardless of discipline. One faculty member noted that “entrepreneurial thinking is a valuable mindset always, it does not matter if you are going too corporate or not” (Participant 20, Private Non-For-Profit University, Midwest). Educating students in this fashion also encourages empowerment. Entrepreneurship education teaches students how to sell the value of their skills. It was noted that “our career center is having a hard time helping to place students because recruiters do not know what an entrepreneurship student can do. Providing students with skills to sell their techniques is of use in all disciplines” (Participant 4, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast). Another faculty member noted:

Entrepreneurship education really adds value to the curriculum to the average student, so that you can take a student and say look, whether you get a job or not, here is the opportunity for you to create your own job, for you to own your own business. (Participant 2, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast)

**Encouraging economic development.** The purpose of entrepreneurship education is also to encourage economic development. It was noted that “some of this entrepreneurship education that is going on in colleges and universities is really like an incubator” (Participant 5, Public, Midwest). Like an incubator, students “have to start a business and produce kind of a better service” (Participant 5, Public, Midwest). It was stated that:

Entrepreneurship education is primarily to give people the knowledge and skills necessary to have the greatest success in starting and growing businesses. We also have a strong ethical part to our program. So we not only want them to engage in these behaviors but to do so with full consideration of ethical implications.

(Participant 1, Private Non-For-Profit University, Midwest)

Faculty members noted obligations to their stakeholders as a driver for encouraging economic development through instruction. “It is academic development but economic development is certainly a long-term goal” (Participant 18, Public, Midwest). Alignment with stakeholder goals is measured via output-based program evaluation. One faculty member explained:

Entrepreneurship is a process that takes place in stages over time. What we do is measure inputs and outputs. So nobody is looking at what is between the input and the output which is very important. And that is being neglected at this point. So it is primarily output-based program evaluation. (Participant 19, Public, Midwest)

The adherence to stakeholder evaluation also elicited feedback on how tensions grow as a result of making economic development a goal of education. The question came up as to what role student start-ups should play in the classroom. One faculty member shared that:

I think that another sort of fundamental conflict is do we want students starting up ventures in the program or after the program or is the expectation that I am just going to start companies 10 years down the road. Sometimes, I think that perspective, sort of guiding philosophy an administrator or faculty member has

plays a very significant role in how much they support entrepreneurship or how much they support different activities within the entrepreneurship program.

(Participant 13, Public, Midwest)

Finally, multiple faculty members noted that “there is no reason that educators should not be able to teach students how to start a business” (Participant 22, Public, Midwest).

Another faculty member reflected that:

You can teach entrepreneurship to help students start businesses. You can teach entrepreneurship and follow one of the other theory lines about looking at the world, looking at opportunities, what an opportunity means in the world and how do you start using your creativity and innovation skills to bring together resources to sort of meet those opportunities. And when you talk about that, now suddenly it is not just about starting your own business, it is about working for companies who they now find would like to hire them because you have these skills that take them further. (Participant 21, Public, Midwest)

**Validating the entrepreneurial lifestyle.** The purpose of entrepreneurship education is to validate the entrepreneurial lifestyle. In essence, faculty members identified the need and mission to expose students to the realities of entrepreneurship. This purpose was seen as a challenge by many. There is a financial tradeoff in being able to give students a realistic job preview of this career path given all the attention and large volume of people that are enrolling in entrepreneurship classes. In undergraduate education, it was noted that faculty are “helping students figure out who they want to be in this world and how they want to think and how they want to approach it” (Participant

8, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast). For example, “if you are going to start a business which is what we think is fundamentally important to entrepreneurship, you have to be ready for change or innovation on a constant basis” (Participant 3, Public, Midwest). Another faculty member noted:

The other is just educating people who may have no motivation to become an entrepreneur about who entrepreneurs are, what they do, how entrepreneurial thinking and processes and tools and techniques can benefit them even though they may work for someone else, which in turn can make them better citizens.

(Participant 7, Public, Northeast)

Other faculty members noted the need to expose a realistic picture to the students of themselves within entrepreneurship. Taking the individual learner into consideration was noted in the interviews. One faculty member mentioned that “I really try very hard to help them understand the human side of work and how it affects their success”

(Participant 6, Private Non-For-Profit University, Southwest). Another stated:

You need the individual because you have got to think about your own capabilities and your own aspirations, your own personal goals and how they will fit within the team but you also need to be able to function in a team if you are going to be in some sort of venture. (Participant 24, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast)

Another faculty member highlighted:

So I think the opportunity for students to recognize that they can play a central role in transforming their own lives, transforming the world around them is sort of

the central issue. So giving them mental models, helping them build mental models and these functional skill sets that they need and linking them, helping them to build networks, I think all those activities sort of roll into this idea that as humans, we have this unique gift of agency and in social structures, you do not necessarily facilitate that. (Participant 13, Public, Midwest)

Finally, in exposing students to entrepreneurship, the human characteristics of an entrepreneur should also be addressed. One faculty member said, “I always tell my students it is probably the most excitement and fun you will ever have in your career, but you are going to be terrified most of the time you are doing it...you cannot have fear” (Participant 13, Public, Midwest). Another faculty member stated:

But entrepreneurs are not entirely rational in that sense that is their ability to suspend disbelief, their ability to see things that other people do not see, to resolve problems in ways other people have not thought of. I think those are the key elements. And I always know I am not going to dissuade those people anyway. I could say whatever I want and I would not dissuade an entrepreneur. (Participant 6, Private Non-For-Profit University, Southwest)

**Explaining the myth of entrepreneurship.** Due to media hype and heavy marketing about entrepreneurship in American culture, faculty members see one purpose of entrepreneurship education as to demystify the domain. There are many fallacies in entrepreneurship that are embedded in culture. For example, there is the myth of the lone ranger. This myth asserts that an entrepreneur can create and sustain a venture on his or her own. Another is the fallacy of the idea-

driver. One faculty member noted that “serial innovators do not engage in idea-type stuff...serial innovators work on the problem...they work on multiple tests” (Participant 22, Midwest, Public). Another faculty member shared that:

Movies (and other things) have sort of popularized entrepreneurship as this growing cultural narrative around this mythology of entrepreneurs. And I think it is great for lots of attention but I think there is a critical, fundamental misconception built into that as well. (Participant 13, Public, Midwest)

With the increase in entrepreneurship across universities in the United States, quality issues in the teaching of entrepreneurship are becoming apparent. One faculty member noted:

I think one of the main issues that we are having is since entrepreneurship is growing, everyone wants a piece of that and so the actual quality education you can get to be a better entrepreneur is becoming diluted. (Participant 4, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast)

The role of faculty members is to bring some reality to the discipline. Faculty members have to educate students that they will need to have “the courage and the strength and the fortitude to hang in until good things can happen” (Participant 1, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast). A faculty member commented that:

Realism...I think it takes the hope out of entrepreneurship and I think the fundamental point of entrepreneurship at its core, as a whole, you have to have the belief that you can do it. Come hell or high water...one of the fundamental problems...is that you are trying to give them as much rounded, realistic skills

that you can give them but in the meantime, you can never give up. And I think that business schools tend to grind out hope for lack of a better way to put it.

(Participant 20, Private Non-For-Profit University, Midwest)

In providing a real view of entrepreneurship, faculty members must also highlight tips for improving the practice. For example, one faculty member noted that “we can go through routines like business plans and I do not think that is the essence of entrepreneurship.

There is some part of entrepreneurship that is almost dogged persistence” (Participant 16, Midwest, Public). Another noted the importance of learning how to pick a team effectively:

A classic problem of an entrepreneur, picking a bunch of people like themselves to be on their team...this is the exact wrong thing to do. You have to pick the people that complement you, not that are identical twins to you. (Participant 2, Private Non-For-Profit University, Northeast)

**Articulating how to identify and exploit opportunity.** Entrepreneurship education is intended to teach a student how to identify and exploit opportunity. As one faculty member stated, “Because I’m an entrepreneur, I see opportunities” (Participant 5, Public, Midwest). Another noted that:

I need students to know what entrepreneurial capitalism is. It is important to have the innovation side of it and also what I call the capitalist side of it you might say. But the difference between an innovator and an entrepreneur and a capitalist is that an innovator creates new products and services or makes existing products and services better. (Participant 15, Public, Northeast)



Faculty members stressed the importance of focusing on opportunity seeking and resource advantage theories, not business planning, in building entrepreneurship education content. One faculty member noted that “the concepts are going to be the same, recognition of opportunity, strategy, differentiation, launch tactics, pivot or persevere, it is all the same no matter what the business is” (Participant 5, Public, Midwest).

After learning how to exploit the opportunity, the faculty members want to know that the students will be able to leverage their skills in the long run. One faculty member stated:

There is this part of entrepreneurship that is very much kind of this social creation of reality in that people talk about pivots and stuff. A lot of that is hitting a barrier and pivoting over, kind of finding this path to value creation which I think is really core of the activity. (Participant 16, Public, Midwest)

Some faculty members noted that exploiting opportunity directly relates to value creation. However, their definition of value creation excludes certain types of small businesses from being covered in the classroom. For example, in this definition, franchises were not considered entrepreneurial ventures. A faculty member commented that:

So I differentiate between entrepreneurship and small business. To me, small business is not always entrepreneurship. It would not be entrepreneurship unless it is drilling down on the whole value creating and generating a net value on things. (Participant 16, Public, Midwest)

**Linking creative and predictive logic.** Faculty members see entrepreneurship education as linking creative and predictive logic. As one faculty member noted, “entrepreneurship lives in a different market...you can define the differences but clearly, you need some creativity and innovation curriculum within an entrepreneurship education” (Participant 2, Private Non-For-Profit, Midwest). Entrepreneurship is not solely a business degree; it takes other disciplines into consideration for the benefit of the students in the long run in their entrepreneurial pursuits and in validating the discipline. For example, one faculty member shared:

And so I think in trying to validate entrepreneurship as a real and scientific and intellectually-rigorous field, entrepreneurship has sort of found a niche, a place in things like psychology. So we spend a lot of time doing cognitive behavior stuff, psychology, science—I think it is all about legitimizing it. We spend a ton of time and a lot of writing on the entrepreneur. I think so little time is spent talk about the entrepreneurial organization, the macro effects of entrepreneurship but there was a time when if you talked to me about that, if you talked about entrepreneurship as economics, you would get slapped on the hand. (Participant 21, Public, Midwest)

Creativity came out countless times in interviews. One faculty member commented that, “We are missing the power of the creating process by putting it into a fixing box...I think there is so much power and understanding in our power to create” (Participant 20, Private Non-For-Profit, Midwest). Faculty members generally defined creativity as, thinking fun things, thinking new things” (Participant 22, Private Non-For-Profit, Northeast). The

interviews noted that creativity is crucial to innovation. Innovation is doing something about or with the creativity, actually taking some action and executing on an idea. One faculty member noted that:

Creativity is the source of all innovation and everything, all change basically in the world. Well, man-made change, the good change then. That is another area I want to improve in my course offerings. (Participant 19, Public, Midwest)

The blending of creativity with predictive logic and business skills also came out in the interviews. This blending is seen as a goal of entrepreneurship education:

I think that the entrepreneur drives from that creativity into coming up with a great solution to some problem in the marketplace and then finding the market and finding the resources and the people and driving it into a business model. So I see entrepreneurship taking that innovation and going several steps further into actually launching a business. (Participant 12, Private Non-For-Profit, Northeast)

### **Findings Research Sub-Question 2: Linking Theory and Practice in Instruction**

The research revealed how faculty members perceive the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction in the classroom at their respective universities by (a) assuring relevancy; (b) nurturing reflection; and (c) driving outreach. Most faculty members identified with the idea that, “theory is the foundation upon which the house of practice is built” (Participant 7, Public, Northeast) and that, “nothing is as practical as a good theory” (Participant 15, Public, Northeast). They also stressed the importance of practical application of the theories which can be summed up in a quote from one faculty member: “we are hardly ivory tower; we’re out there every day” (Participant 7, Public, Northeast).

Faculty members also often expressed the way they linked theory and practice by using metaphors or analogies in this section of the interview protocol more than during the other sections of the interviews. This use of metaphors came across as a justification for how they instructed in the classroom but also highlighted the importance of theory in instruction. For example one faculty member shared that:

I use a metaphor when I start almost every class....to explain this link between theory and practice...it is sort of like my own personal tennis game. I am a pretty decent tennis player except for my serve and I get out there and I can hit and practice and practice and practice and practice my serve but it is going to never get better if I do not have someone who theoretically understands how to serve better, how to use that knowledge to help me improve, to guide me, to analyze it. So this theory gives us the way to improve our practice. If we do not use the theory, then we just keep practicing the same bad habits. (Participant 8, Private Non-For-Profit, Northeast)

**Assuring relevancy.** Faculty members across interviews stressed the importance of assuring relevancy in their instruction. Faculty members highlighted taking a ‘practice-oriented approach’ in which we teach entrepreneurship and making theory relevant via using experiential learning techniques to engage the students. There was also a concern across faculty members to stay relevant and also balance the theory and practical application of their instruction. One faculty member noted that:

It is very difficult for many people in academia, especially when they have never been an entrepreneur, to convey that connection. It always remains theoretical for

them...but for me, it is a real driver. I am always concerned about not being too theoretical but not being too practical. So what is the balance? (Participant 7, Public, Northeast)

Examples of techniques used to incorporate relevancy into the curriculum included leveraging books, newspapers, case studies, field-trips, videos, games, simulations, guest speakers, business models, and business plans. Faculty members highlighted that the task of incorporating relevancy into instruction is difficult as programs continually iterate on their missions. Innovation is still needed. The challenge to incorporate new techniques outside of typical class-room lecture requires substantial time. A faculty member remarked that:

Experiential education takes more faculty effort than classroom education. And faculty use classroom theory sometimes as an excuse as to why they do not want to do experiential education because it does take more time and effort.

(Participant 2, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast)

Only one faculty member noted that the ideal blend of theory and practice was already attained in her program. It was stated that:

I actually think we have the perfect of balance of theory and practice. I mean it has been around for years. We are constantly tweaking it and changing it in a variety of ways. I actually think that a big fundamental change would not be appropriate for the program. (Participant 9, Public, Southwest)

**Nurturing reflection.** Faculty members spoke about the need to nurture

reflection in order to connect theory and practice. It was noted that time in the classroom is limited and only one aspect of entrepreneurship education. Education is personal; the idea of understanding oneself within the context of an educational process was highlighted in interviews. Leveraging techniques to engage the inner thought processes of the students were stressed. For example, one faculty member noted that he would ask his students to “tell me one question that our conversations today or this week raised for you” in order to spark reflective thought in the classroom (Participant 8, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast). Other faculty members used wikis, blogs, discussions, journals, decision making simulations, and writing to encourage reflection to link theory and practice more closely. Finally, one faculty member noted that, “I have a lot of freedom to structure the class in a way that makes it a reflection of what I think is really valuable to students” (Participant 20, Private Not-For-Profit, Midwest).

**Drive outreach.** Faculty members identified outreach, or engagement with the entrepreneurship world outside the classroom as important to connecting theory and practice. The idea of touching the market and subsequently connecting people in the field was noted in the interviews. Multiple faculty members cited leveraging assignments that required field interviews as a technique to drive outreach. Other examples included encouraging student attendance at conferences and pitch-competitions, connecting students to other outside-university resources for further assistance, and setting up mentoring opportunities.

Finally, faculty members noted the importance of internships and apprenticeships in the field to encourage the application of the theory into practice while building a network. One faculty member commented that:

For me, it is all about the practice. And I think that is where entrepreneurship education is going too. It is becoming much more experiential, much more practice-based. Now the theory is important. So we have a wrapper of theory and understanding of theory to improve students' skills but we are fooling ourselves if we think they are learning through a classroom-based, explanation of theory. The students learn when the education is experiential-oriented, practice-oriented.

(Participant 2, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast)

### **Findings Research Sub-Question 3: Future Priorities/Goals for Instruction**

The research documented six future priorities for the faculty members in their teaching of undergraduate entrepreneurship. These priorities include (a) encouraging peer-evaluation; (b) nurturing reflection; (c) guiding experiential learning; (d) adapting to students; (e) generating networks; and (f) embracing new content. Throughout each interview, faculty members stressed the struggle to adjust to such an increasing spotlight on the entrepreneurship domain. One faculty member's idea summed up the overall sentiments of the participants:

I think there is a band-wagon effect which is happening. We spend a lot of time in institutional theory reading about fads and fashions. But currently entrepreneurship is a hot buzzword and it is very fashionable and we're hearing it everywhere and anywhere. I think teaching entrepreneurship more than

sometimes anything else is about giving up control and following the students' lead. And thinking in every planned way how do you meet them where they are and let them lead the discussion and go where they need to go. And most of our faculty are not trained as educators to start with...and secondly, certainly not trained in anything other than a traditional controlled case discussion. And all of that is going to fail in our ability to teach entrepreneurship. (Participant 8, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast)

**Encouraging peer-evaluation.** Faculty members repeated the need and the importance of leveraging the peer network more effectively for evaluation. The peer network is not only a valuable asset that is already built in to classes but also a perceived effective mechanism to meet the needs of “millennial learners”. One faculty member noted that, “I think you get a much richer experience of both expressing entrepreneurial ideas and reacting to entrepreneurial ideas in the classroom setting in person” (Participant 23, Private Not-For-Profit, Midwest).

Peer-evaluation could not only supplement current programmatic evaluation, which tends to focus on criteria set for national ranking organizations, but also force student to focus on skills necessary to successful entrepreneurship including pitching ideas, giving and receiving critical feedback, and analyzing ideas and execution plans. One faculty member stated the importance of peer-evaluation in encouraging the exposure of ideas:

Entrepreneurial ideas, whether they be an innovation or the idea to start a business, they often are born in private but at some point, they have to be exposed



to other people who could either be critics or advocates of it. And so I think that exposing your idea which has been previously private, exposing that idea to others online, I think it is a very different process than exposing it to people personally. (Participant 23, Private Not-For-Profit, Midwest)

The ability to obtain feedback as a result of the exposure of an idea is also a focus for the future. One participant noted that, “adventure is the hypothesis...so if you can disprove it on the blackboard, then there is no reason to go into the world to disprove it” (Participant 15, Public, Northeast). One faculty member highlighted that:

And most of the source of uncertainty stems from the stuff you do not know you do not know. And the only way to answer questions about what you do and do not know is to actually do something. So you have to test your idea. You have to experiment. Action is required. And so if you do that, you can get engaged in the process and learn. (Participant 3, Public, Midwest)

Another participant noted the importance of peer evaluation in helping students learn about accountability. This accountability does not only relate to in-class assignments but is intended to be useful for the students in the long-run as well. A faculty member explained:

I have been pushing for this...to recognize the importance of entrepreneurs getting peer support and peer interaction to help with what they are doing. We have started to create peer groups within our classes, so that they are accountable to each other for the work that they are doing in their individual businesses, business models, and projects. (Participant 1, Private Not-For-Profit, Midwest)

**Nurturing reflection.** Faculty members detailed the priority to further nurture reflection in the classroom. Nurturing reflection could be done by supporting discussion, engaging students with thought-provoking questions, and providing a mechanism for students to capture their ideas. Reflection could also be focused on by encouraging case writing. One faculty member reflected that, “case writing to develop theory, I find that intriguing” (Participant 11, Private Not-For-Profit, Midwest). Another faculty member noted the importance of journaling, specifically concept journaling for students’ ideas about entrepreneurial products, services, or solutions. It was remarked:

I have the students in the first entrepreneurship course keep a concept journal and we begin it right at the beginning of the semester. And they turn it in towards the end of the semester for me to review and I ask them to come up with five product ideas, five service ideas, and five non-profit ideas and to develop it. And I give them some guidelines on what to do in developing that. (Participant 11, Private Not-For-Profit, Midwest)

The interest to encourage more reflection in the classroom is a way to combat feedback from several stereotypical personality characteristics that entrepreneurial students have become known for across universities. As one participant explained:

I mean the gut reaction from a lot of my fellow scholars is that entrepreneurs tend to be not very reflective, the ready, fire, aim mentality. But I think that is sort of high. I am not necessarily talking about a passive-reflective mindset but sort of the in-the-rough reflection that we all make, just using better cognition to some degree or another in our daily lives. (Participant 15, Public, Northeast)

**Guiding experiential learning.** Faculty members want to guide experiential learning in their instruction. Experiential learning is a more active form of learning that supplements or replaces traditional, lecture-based instruction. Faculty members talked about the barriers to experiential learning that “a lot of people just do not want to take the extra time or get their students to, in their opinion, waste their time with that.” However, they also addressed the need to improve and focus on engagement and experience moving forward. One faculty member spoke about engagement as, “I think that is really the future of education where you are not just giving people a classroom experience but you are giving them an engagement experience” (Participant 2, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast). Another faculty member shared stories of engaging experiences in the classroom. “I have also noticed that until you get your hands dirty, you do not really get a good appreciation...I think that they learn a lot more from the mistakes they make” (Participant 17, Public, Southwest). Finally, one faculty member remarked that, “I would like to give people the experience of self-efficacy and engagement that can come with experiencing entrepreneurship” (Participant 15, Public, Northeast).

Often the word ‘pracademics’, to note the blending of practical application in academics, was used in describing the importance of experiential learning. One participant observed that “a lot of people hate the word but that is the pracademics, practical academics of entrepreneurship” (Participant 10, Public, Southwest). Another maintained that, “we have very little reading about entrepreneurship and it is more about let us do entrepreneurship...let us make this realistic and practical” (Participant 4, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast).

Finally, faculty members stressed the importance of experiential learning due to the increase of programmatic initiatives encouraging entrepreneurship at the university level. Often students and external-facing stakeholders see disconnects between programs and centers making the entrepreneurial map tough for people to navigate on campus. Experiential learning could bridge the gap between university resources. One faculty noted that:

So that means that what goes on in the entrepreneurship center is completely disconnected from what is going on in the classroom and the student experience is completely disconnected. And so the students will go to the center and say well, I am learning this in the center from this practitioner and entrepreneur. They walk in the classroom and the faculty member says oh, I do not know anything about that. And so there is this disconnect. (Participant 24, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast)

**Adapting to students.** Faculty members revealed the importance of being student-focused and adapting to students more in the future. Student-centered learning is important to the faculty members. One faculty member shared that, “every program should bend over backwards to help students distinguish themselves or decide whether or not they are really cut out for entrepreneurship” (Participant 6, Public, Southwest). Adapting to students also relates to reaching a more academically diverse base of students. While entrepreneurship typically had revolved around business majors, faculty members noted a need to be able to reach a more diverse student body with instruction. Faculty wanted to encourage multidisciplinary projects. One faculty member’s goal

would be to have, “at least 50 percent of the class be non-business students” (Participant 5, Public, Midwest). Additionally another faculty member documented the need to broaden the base of students not only to adapt but to encourage innovation stating that:

One of my objectives is to broaden the base of students in entrepreneurship education....you do not have to be in business and first of all, no innovation ever comes out of a business school. The way to run a business comes out of a business school but the innovation does not come out of a business school.

(Participant 5, Public, Midwest)

**Generating networks.** Faculty members want to generate networks of people and resources for their students during instruction. Some faculty members commented that this interest was as a result of the core mission of entrepreneurship education, to connect people together to obtain a goal. One faculty commented:

What I am trying to get at is to establish entrepreneurship as a social relationship and a social transaction....to teach entrepreneurship as being part of how people work with other people to get what they want. You need people and physical resources. (Participant 21, Public, Midwest)

Other faculty members explained that the need to generate a network was important to sustaining an entrepreneur’s long-term interest in creating an enterprise. One faculty member noted that:

It is important to create a social cohort and network that provides the social support you need to have the courage to keep on going, persevere, to hang in there

and do it, and do risky things like go out and ask important people hard questions.

(Participant 1, Private Not-For-Profit, Midwest)

Another faculty talked about how the network was important to a student. Networks matter to students both while in the classroom and also after they leave the classroom:

So what I tell students is often that they are learning how to use a set of tools in class but when they are actually ready to use them in the real world, they should call me, because it is going to be harder when they actually do it in the real world.

It is one kind of thing to do it in the classroom. It is another thing to do it in the real world. (Participant 15, Public, Northeast)

Finally, generating networks was presented as being important to deal with the growing and multidisciplinary nature of instruction. One faculty member stressed that generating networks was in response to a major challenge in entrepreneurship:

A major challenge is trying to link students from various functional disciplines around a campus together, definitely to build the best teams is when the students are connected from engineering or design or other areas. And that is a real challenge, particularly at the undergraduate level. (Participant 13, Public, Midwest)

**Embracing new content.** Faculty members want to keep their content fresh and leverage resources both inside and outside the university. Faculty members wish to incorporate more technology, writing, aspects on cultural narratives content, venture capitalism, angel investing, and economic trends more effectively into their instruction. Faculty members also commented on the need to encourage multidisciplinary instruction

but explained the challenges in this area due to the stove-piped mentality of universities.

One faculty member explained:

I get the same bullshit from basic academics, disciplinarians who do not understand interdisciplinary fields and think that they are at no fault...they are not real in terms of their scholarship. (Participant 7, Public, Northeast)

The faculty members also wanted to be able to leverage resources available in the local community without conflict. One faculty member noted, “there is a lot of industry domain knowledge and you have to bridge the gap...there is just a lot of work”

(Participant 18, Public, Midwest). Another faculty member commented that:

SBA, SCORE, all these other things...they are not all as good. So being able to pick and choose where you are going to send students is tough without insulting anyone. (Participant 4, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast)

Finally, faculty members wanted to enhance their teaching skills overall. Having access to more resources to help their professional development was noted in the interviews. Additionally, several faculty commented on the tradeoff of being able to embrace all facets of entrepreneurship within a university while going through a tenure process. The frustrations of faculty members trying to bridge the academic and practical gap with their own experience and struggling as to how to convey this to the students came out in interviews. The stress of finding effective entrepreneurship faculty was also noted:

We found that we could teach entrepreneurs to teach but we had a hard time teaching teachers entrepreneurship. If you have not participated in it, it is very hard to really understand what it is all about. (Participant 3, Public, Midwest)

### **Summary**

The interviews revealed faculty perspectives on the purpose of entrepreneurship education: (a) revealing the value of entrepreneurship; (b) encouraging economic development; (c) validating the entrepreneurial lifestyle; (d) explaining the myth of entrepreneurship; (e) articulating how to identify and exploit opportunity; and (f) linking creative and predictive logic. It revealed how faculty members perceive the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction: (a) assuring relevancy; (b) nurturing reflection; and (c) driving outreach. Finally, the research documented six future priorities for the faculty members in their teaching of undergraduate entrepreneurship: (a) encouraging peer-evaluation; (b) nurturing reflection; (c) guiding experiential learning; (d) adapting to students; (e) generating networks; and (f) embracing new content.



## CHAPTER 5 Discussion

This research is important because it creates a working theory on how practical education is and should be incorporated into entrepreneurship programs in higher education to align both with policy and curriculum priorities. The analysis of the data collected during the two-phase collection process builds a working theory that administrators should reveal the value of entrepreneurship and engage students. Multiple data sources included free writes, memoing, and interviews resulting in the working theory of reveal and engage. Figure 20 is a Wordle of the results of the analysis on the data collected regarding faculty members' perspectives on the purpose, application, and future goals of entrepreneurship education. The Wordle allows for another visual method to think about the meaning of the results of this research.

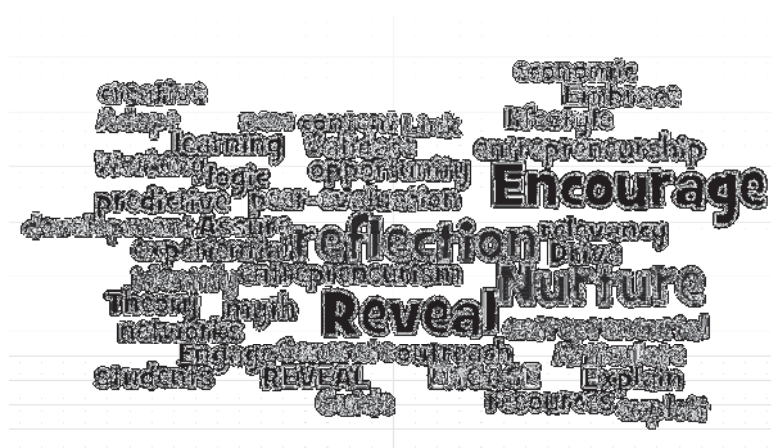


Figure 20. Working theory wordle.

## **Implications for Revealing the Value of Entrepreneurship and Engaging: A Working Theory to Enhance Practice**

This working theory can be operationalized and might improve policy. Based on the reporting of 24 faculty members teaching entrepreneurship across the United States, administrators should reflect upon the diverging stances on the purpose of entrepreneurship education and how this influences the link between theory and practice in course instruction. Administrators might also look at faculty members' future goals, because some of their goals might already align with program goals. For example, one participant commented that entrepreneurship is an "academic signature of the university and the classroom" (Participant 2, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast). However, it is important to leverage the viewpoints, interests, and goals of the faculty into future iterations of both departmental and university goals. As another stated, "entrepreneurship education is almost always within the business schools and has been the poor stepchild...there is a pecking order" (Participant 2, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast).

If administrators reveal and engage the faculty members when moving curriculum forward, there could be opportunity for strong innovation to occur within the discipline of entrepreneurship education. As faculty members struggle to reveal the value of entrepreneurship and engage students in the confines of a classroom with limited resources, it would be reassuring to know that, moving forward, administrators are being equally entrepreneurial in setting priorities for respecting academic diversity.

In addition, this study brought much attention to faculty member voices: their ideas need to be incorporated into the design of future entrepreneurship curriculum.

Based on interviews, it was apparent that faculty members do not feel incorporated into the process. One faculty member, when asked how to approach curriculum development, reflected: “I do not get paid to think about it” (Participant 15, Public, Northeast). The interviews showed that faculty members want to work together across academic domains but struggle with the power to do so effectively. A faculty member commented:

The other challenge is what I call respect for academic diversity....everyone has their own little insecurities. The best way to combat those insecurities is to push down the people around you rather than lift everyone for their value. So a lot of the spread is just a matter of making certain that there is academic respect for one another, you might say. (Participant 2, Private Not-For-Profit, Northeast)

Additionally, the data indicated that it is important to recognize that faculty members are ready for change. One participant stated, “I mean if the business plan idea was an effective vehicle for pedagogy, you would see some improvements but you do not...we need change” (Participant 22, Public, Midwest). Another noted that “everyone wants to start programs and integrating...so I think it is by design from the top-down, but I think we have even had a kind of grassroots effort also” (Participant 18, Public, Midwest). This statement reflects the notion that universities must be entrepreneurial themselves in order to effectively educate in the entrepreneurship space and have credibility. One faculty member explained:

Innovation is the creation of new ideas....and universities are kind of full of innovations sitting on the shelf but they have done nothing with it. And so in our

society, the process of actually generating impact occurs through the movement of that technology into the market place. (Participant 16, Public, Midwest)

This drive to maintain credibility and national rankings serves as motivation for a university and schools within a university to stay engaged in entrepreneurial initiatives. One participant shared that drive: “I think that a key part of having an impact on the university is the desire of the school to not be at the periphery...it is easy to be isolated” (Participant 16, Public, Midwest). Entrepreneurship education must be a priority and must have alignment that is seamless. One faculty member highlighted an example:

Every student in the business school is required to take at least one entrepreneurship course because entrepreneurship has been identified by the university as a strategic area in which we want to excel and in which we invest significant resources. (Participant 19, Public, Midwest)

Credibility can more easily come by working on plans and concrete definitions. What is entrepreneurship education? As one participant noted, “that is the million-dollar question...I do not know if the field has necessarily come up with a defined definition” (Participant 13, Public, Midwest). One way to make progress towards resolving this ambiguity is to leverage the working theory to reveal the value of entrepreneurship and engage students.

### **Limitations and Barriers**

There are limitations to the design of this research. First of all, grounded theory often comes under scrutiny for lacking theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1998). Grounded theory requires that researchers account for their positions in the research. I focused on

being as self-reflective as possible by memoing throughout the entire process. Memoing ensured that my personal biases, world-views, and assumptions did not interfere with the data collection. However, memoing also helped me collect my emerging thoughts on the working theory. Memoing and the respective discipline to integrate these self-reflective and analytical coding techniques throughout the project was a challenge as my researcher identity, as noted in Chapter 1, is a strength and a limitation.

Second, another limitation of the study is the identification of when saturation has been obtained. This determination of saturation came when no new concepts were being derived from the interviews without changing the scope of the original research questions and sub-questions. The researcher directly impacts the point at which the themes become verified. The point of saturation can occur at any time, but after reading and re-reading the data, saturation occurred at 24 interviews in this research. While the sample is purposeful to align with the creation of a working theory, the size of the participant pool also could be seen as a limitation to this research.

Third, the criteria for participation in the study left room for some different types of situations to be identified. For example, the first criterion, being a faculty member that teaches entrepreneurship, was not as clear as it could have been. I did not specify that participants had to teach predominantly in the entrepreneurship program. I had faculty members participate that taught entrepreneurship but were affiliated with many different programs at each of the universities. This did not pose a problem as I incorporated the varied feedback into the study, but in hindsight, it would have been ideal to make more tightly-scoped participant criteria. Additionally, the criteria for having at least one year of

service in their respective programs at their university opened up different complications. There were faculty members who had been teaching entrepreneurship at one of the ranked universities but were currently visiting at other universities or had just switched to a new university on the ranking list; their perspectives were hard to attribute to one school specifically and therefore they were not included.

Fourth, the data was focused on a data collection period of five months from August through December 2012. Overall, the data collection period was relatively short. A longitudinal study would be more effective to track faculty perspectives over time. A longer-term study would also allow more flexibility to address scheduling conflicts with sabbaticals and travel schedules of faculty members.

Fifth, the lack of transferability is a threat to the external validity of a study (Creswell, 2013). There are hundreds of undergraduate entrepreneurship programs in the United States, but only 25 of them are listed in Entrepreneur.com's 2011 rankings. The response rate by individual university rate varied. Nine universities from the rankings were not represented in the sample participant pool. Also, there is diversity in the geographic coverage and funding streams associated with each of the 25 schools; it is therefore difficult to find commonality in the data that could be generalizable to the higher education system in the United States or abroad as international institutions were not included in this study.

Sixth, administrators might face barriers when leveraging the working theory of revealing the value of entrepreneurship and engaging students. Funding structures for entrepreneurship programs are diverse and stakeholders representing these funding

groups can have varied goals and motives. Additionally, the working theory assumes a strong hierarchical organizational structure where curriculum is driven from the top-down. Due to lack of training or educational backgrounds, faculty members might not be able to effectively engage with students in less active forms of educational instruction.

Finally, faculty members, like any other potential participant pool for a study, have biases that could have skewed the results and the creation of the working theory. Also, as a researcher, I have biases that influenced the way that I analyzed the data. I mitigated these biases via the memoing process. These biases on both the faculty and researcher side could potentially be further mitigated by completing in-person interviews rather than phone interviews, as body language could be included in the analysis. Phone interviews allow for differentiation in interpretation as the interaction is completely oral and auditory and does not take body language into consideration during analysis.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study incorporated a strong methodological foundation that can be used in the future to further develop the study outside the scope of the research. Specifically, additional interviews could be completed with faculty members outside of the entrepreneurship programs or at universities not included on the 2011 Entrepreneur.com rankings. Interviews could be completed with faculty from other countries to incorporate an international perspective. A quantitative approach could be constructed to create a mixed-method approach for future inquiry. This alternate methodological approach would ground the qualitative data and enhance the statistical relevance of the data

collected. A mixed-methods approach would also allow for a larger audience of scholars to accept the work as it would incorporate a quantitative frame for analysis.

The original model presented in Figure 1 (p. 6 of this manuscript) on how faculty members link the academic and the practical could be used as a baseline for further studies. By utilizing a similar protocol and process, the research could be conducted on other stakeholders within that model enabling for a more complete view of entrepreneurship education from different perspectives and the opportunity to do comparative analyses to strengthen the working theory. The different stakeholders include economic development authorities, government agencies, entrepreneurship students, and alumni. A mixed-methods approach could also be taken when approaching these stakeholder groups in the future.

Finally, as a result of analyzing the data from both the free write and transcribed interviews, there were three topical areas that came out that would be beneficial to study to make the working theory more comprehensive. First, research on program evaluation in entrepreneurship education is needed. With the pursuit of higher rankings, credibility, and prestige on the forefront of many university agendas, understanding faculty perceptions on program evaluation and how it drives instruction would be useful to look into because program evaluation often influences, if not drives, the framework for faculty performance. Second, research on program funding in relationship to organizational structure within a university is needed. Multiple faculty members noted the need to understand the environmental context in which entrepreneurship curriculum is placed within a university. Finally, given pressures from the market, perceptions of on-line



course delivery or hybrid course delivery needs to be researched. Online courses came up in many of the interviews as a potential source of competition and also innovation for the discipline.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This study started and extended current research on entrepreneurship education and provided a voice for faculty members' viewpoints. Faculty members are the link between the professional and academic domains. Their impact on students and in the facilitation of entrepreneurship at the undergraduate level has implications for course instruction, program development, and economic development. Faculty members also impact students, alumni that might be in small businesses, and economic development. The economic impact of these small businesses affects not only alumni donations but the regional economies in which these small businesses operate. By creating an understanding of faculty perspectives, this research can help improve practice. This research also gives this critical stakeholder group a much-needed voice to strengthen entrepreneurship curriculum innovation in a discipline that is quickly evolving.

The results of this research identified faculty perspectives on the purpose of entrepreneurship education including: (a) revealing the value of entrepreneurship; (b) encouraging economic development; (c) validating the entrepreneurial lifestyle; (d) explaining the myth of entrepreneurism; (e) articulating how to identify and exploit opportunity; and (f) linking creative and predictive logic. The research revealed how faculty members perceived the connection of theory to practice in their own instruction by (a) assuring relevancy; (b) nurturing reflection; and (c) driving outreach. Finally, the

research documented six future priorities for the faculty members in their own teaching: (a) encouraging peer-evaluation; (b) nurturing reflection; (c) guiding experiential learning; (d) adapting to students; (e) generating networks; and (f) embracing new content. The research generated a working theory to inform administrators about faculty perspectives when designing undergraduate entrepreneurship programs. This working theory calls upon administrators to reveal the value of entrepreneurship and engage students when defining and designing an undergraduate entrepreneurship curriculum.

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APPENDIX A

Human Subjects Review Board Approval



Office of Research Subject Protection  
James H. ...  
1221 University Ave., Room 2000, Arlington, VA 22204  
Phone: 703-993-1234

**TO:** Shabon Williams van Rosij, College of Education and Human Development

**FROM:** Anni Dale  
Assistant Vice President, Research Compliance 

**PROTOCOL NO.:** 8148

**PROPOSAL NO.:** N/A

**TITLE:** *Hydrating faculty members' perceptions of workplace entrepreneurship*

**DATE:** June 4, 2012

**CC:** Mona Anita K. Olsen

Under George Mason University (GMU) procedures, this project was determined to be exempt by the Office of Research Integrity & Assurance (ORIA) since it falls under DEHS Exempt Category 2, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior.

A copy of the final approved consent document is attached. Please use this stamped copy for your research.

You may proceed with data collection. Please note that all modifications to your protocol must be submitted to the Office of Research Integrity & Assurance for review and approval prior to implementation. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others, including problems regarding data confidentiality must be reported to the GMU OIRA.

GMU is bound by the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects in research contained in The Belmont Report. Even though your data collection procedures are exempt from review by the GMU OIRA, GMU expects you to conduct your research according to the professional standards in your discipline and the ethical guidelines mandated by federal regulations.

Thank you for cooperating with the University by submitting this protocol for review. Please call me at 703-993-3381 if you have any questions.

## APPENDIX B

### **Initial Recruitment Email: Entrepreneurship Education Research**

(Name):

I am a Ph.D. candidate at the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University and am conducting a research project that explores faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education. The study aims to generate a working theory to inform administrators on faculty perspectives when designing undergraduate entrepreneurship programs.

You have been identified as a potential study participant because you are a member of the nationally ranked entrepreneurship program at your university. If you are a faculty member that teaches an entrepreneurship course and you have been affiliated with the entrepreneurship program for more than one year, I encourage you to participate.

The voluntary commitment would be completed in two activities—a free write activity and a phone interview. The total time commitment for both of the two activities, which will take place over the period of two weeks, will be approximately 60 minutes.

I am happy to schedule this at a time that is convenient for you.

Attached you will find an informed consent form to review. I hope to have the opportunity to learn from you! Many thanks for your help!

Regards,  
Mona Anita Olsen

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8146  
George Mason University

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Consent Form

#### RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is being conducted to explore faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a 10 minute free write activity and participate in a 45-minute audio taped phone interview at a later date.

#### RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

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#### BENEFITS

As a participant in the study, there will be no direct benefit to you as a participant.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Collected data (free write activities via an online survey tool and audio files from phone recordings) will be kept on Smartsheet, an online project management and storage tool that is only accessible to the researcher. No individually identifiable information will be disclosed or published, and all results will be presented as aggregate, summary data. Upon completion of the free write, the free write will be in the researcher's possession until coded. Free writes will be collected and stored on Smartsheet. The Smartsheet servers hosting the free write utilize industry-standard Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) cryptographic protocols to ensure security and data integrity for communications over the Internet. Individual free write responses will have computer-generated numerical identifiers and all raw data will be kept in a password-secured file hosted on the Smartsheet's server and accessible only to the researcher. An outside company will provide verbatim transcriptions of the phone interviews. This transcription company will be selected based on its track record with academic transcriptions for universities, pricing, and turn-around time. The transcription company will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Upon completion of the interview, the transcriptions will be in the researcher's possession until coded. Upon requests, participants will have access to their transcripts for accuracy via unique access to Smartsheet. For coded identifiable data: (a) participant's name will not be included on free write map nor the audio recording; (b) a code will be placed on the free write and audio recording; (c) through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your free write and audio recording

do to the participant's identity; and (d) only the researcher will have access to the identification key. While it is understood that no computer transmission can be perfectly secure, reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of your transmission. Raw data will be deleted from the Smartsheet's server upon notification by the researcher of successful publication of the aggregated research results.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty. Any data collected from the faculty before withdrawing from the study will be disposed of via shredder and deletion from the audio repository. There are no costs to you or any other party. There will be no compensation for your participation.

### **CONTACT**

This research is being conducted by Mona Anita Olsen at the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University. She may be reached at 703-217-9620 for questions or to report a research-related problem. The faculty advisor's name is Dr. Sharon Williams van Rooij, (703) 993-9704. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

Version date; June 5, 2012

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## APPENDIX D

### Interview Confirmation Email

Thank you for your submission of the free write activity for my research study titled:  
*Exploring faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education.*

This confirms our phone interview scheduled on (day), (date) at (x) time. The interview should take 45 minutes.

The call-in details are noted below:

Number:

Access Code:

Please let me know if you have any questions.

With thanks,  
Mona Anita Olsen

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## APPENDIX E

### Waitlist Follow-Up Email

Thanks for agreeing to participate in an interview for my study titled: *Exploring faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education*. We have more volunteers than expected for participation in this study.

Your name has been added to the waitlist and I will be in touch if a participant slot opens for the research.

Many thanks for your interest and hope to have the opportunity to work with you.

Best,  
Mona Anita Olsen

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## APPENDIX F

### **Follow-up Recruitment Email: Entrepreneurship Education Research**

(Name):

I wanted to see if you had a chance to consider participating in my research that will help me complete my dissertation research at George Mason University.

I am passionate about entrepreneurship education and really hope to be able to share your perspective in my work. I'm attaching the Informed Consent form again for your convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,  
Mona Anita Olsen

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## APPENDIX G

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Follow-Up Recruitment Email: Entrepreneurship Education Research**

I wanted to reach out one last time to see if you had a chance to consider participating in my research that will help me complete my dissertation research at George Mason University. The Informed Consent form is attached for your convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,  
Mona Anita Olsen

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George Mason University

## APPENDIX H

### Free Write Email

Thanks for agreeing to participate in my study titled: *Exploring faculty members' perceptions of undergraduate entrepreneurship education*. I am looking forward to working with you.

Please complete the free write activity at (URL). This should take approximately ten minutes.

Once I receive the results of your free write activity, I will be in touch to set up an interview.

With thanks,  
Mona Anita Olsen

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George Mason University

## APPENDIX I

### Free Write Activity

#### Free Write Activity Dissertation

Please take ten minutes to complete the free write activity. Please input the date and your first name before filling in the completion of the three statements below.

Date\*

First Name\*

The purpose of entrepreneurship education is\*

The roles of theory and practice in my instruction\*

My future priorities for the goals of my courses\*

Submit

## APPENDIX J

### Memoing Log

#### Memoing Log DISSERTATION

Use this online form to submit an online memo which recaps your self-reflective thoughts on your dissertation research.

**Memo Date\***

  
**Log of Thoughts\***

Powered by [Smartsheet](#)

## APPENDIX K

### **One-on-One Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

#### **Discussion Guide**

##### **Introduction**

Thank you for speaking with me today. The purpose of the call is to get your thoughts on your perception of the purpose of entrepreneurship education, the connection of theory to practice in your own instruction, and the future priorities and/or goals in your teaching.

##### **Background Questions**

1. What is your educational background?
2. What type of position do you have at the university currently (Tenure, Tenure-Track, Contract, Adjunct)?
3. What is your title?
4. How many years have you been teaching?
5. How many years have you taught entrepreneurship?
6. What is your gender?
7. What is your age?
8. What is your race?
9. How many classes do you teach each semester (on average)?
10. Do you own a business?
11. Have you owned a business in the past?
12. Do you consult outside of your university commitments?
13. Are you published on entrepreneurship? If yes, where?

14. Are you involved in organizations and activities for students? Which ones?
15. Are you involved in organizations and activities for professional development? Which ones?

### **Entrepreneurship Program/University Questions**

16. Where is your university located?
17. Is your university publically, privately, or publically and privately funded?
18. Are scholarships available for entrepreneurship students?
19. What year entrepreneurship was offered at your university?
20. What is the size of university in student population?
21. What is the enrollment of students in the entrepreneurship program versus the university?
22. What are the current practicum requirements or practice requirements for students within the entrepreneurship program?

### **Perception Questions**

23. What do you understand/perceive/believe is the purpose of entrepreneurship education?
24. What is the connection of theory to practice in your instruction? Can you offer some examples?
25. What are the future priorities in your own teaching?
26. What is the environment of the entrepreneurship program like as compared to the university?
27. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

### **Closing**

Thank you for participating! After I complete all of my interviews, I may contact you again to get additional input based on the data that I have collected. You will have an opportunity to review and comment on coding categories and overall theory development if you choose to do so. Thank you for making a difference!

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Born in London to Americans from Brooklyn, Mona Anita is of Norwegian descent. By the time Mona Anita was twelve years old, her family had moved seven times and lived in four countries: the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Japan.

Mona Anita holds a Masters in Management of Information Technology from the University of Virginia's McIntire School of Commerce and a Bachelor of Science with Distinction from Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration.

Mona Anita was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Program scholarship in Education to Norway by the United States Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board for 2012-2013.

Mona Anita is Founder and President of the Board of the educational nonprofit, iMADdu. iMADdu stands for "I Make A Difference, Do yoU?" and empowers young entrepreneurs through mentoring and participation in its Student Apprenticeship Program (SAP).

Previously, Mona Anita was the Assistant Director of the Mason Small Business Development Center in the Mason Enterprise Center at the Office of Research & Economic Development at George Mason University. She also worked as a Worldwide Sales Analyst for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts and launched a consulting business that focused on operational systems design and analysis for private clubs and small businesses working with the federal government.