

## Some Reflections from the Entrepreneurship Educator's Mirror\*

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### Abstract

The context of this research is based on the European reference framework, which presented 'Entrepreneurship and a sense of initiative' as one of eight key competences for lifelong learning that citizens require in a knowledge-based society. The key competence 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' is defined as "an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives" (EU, 2013, p.8). These European developments and initiatives contribute to the growing evidence of the need for individually based entrepreneurial learning and for more entrepreneurship educators. "Teachers are key actors", (EU, 2015, p.89).

Duening (2010) has attempted to develop the five minds of the future specifically to the five minds of the entrepreneurial future. However, realising that there is a difference between the cognitive thinking process for an entrepreneur and for a non entrepreneur means we will need to provide entrepreneurship educators "with a conviction that we know why we are doing and what we are doing in the entrepreneurship classroom", (Duening, 2010, p. 20). Wilson and Beard (2003) have developed the learning combination lock model which acknowledges the inclusion of the five elements in the model: stimuli, our senses, the filtering process, interpretation and responses. This model is a key component to this research.

This paper is a small initial exploratory study based on a literature review and on four interviews across the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels to help establish a platform for a deeper analysis at the tertiary education level. To date, reflective based interviews using the Pictor Technique have helped to understand the role of learning, experience and key influencers in becoming an entrepreneurship educator. The proposed deeper analysis will continue this approach in an attempt to develop the typology (ies) of an entrepreneurship educator.

**Keywords:** Learning Combination Lock, Experiential Learning, Transformation Learning, Empathy, Entrepreneurship Educator

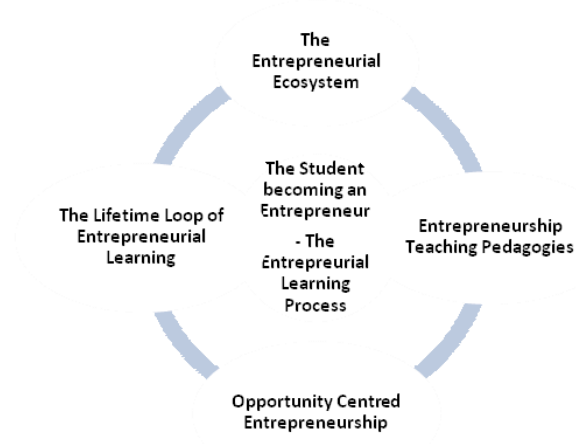
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## 1. Introduction

The literature to date has shown evidence of the evolution of the definition of entrepreneurship to be that of a ubiquitous mindset. This train of thought is also supported in the literature which has tracked the evolution of the profile of the entrepreneur to go beyond his/her personality, to the behaviour of the entrepreneur, to the cognitive process of the entrepreneur to the five minds of the entrepreneurial future (Duenning's 2010 adaptation of Gardner's (2009) five minds of the future). This evolution is further supported by the acknowledgement of the engagement of multiple intelligences in this process with a strong orientation towards the role played by the emotional intelligence of the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial learning process. The literature has suggested the need to study empathy with existing and future developing entrepreneurs and consequently by those involved in the entrepreneurial learning process (Davis, 1990); this includes the educators.

The literature on entrepreneurial education research has begun to study how one learns and, more specifically, what is required for the entrepreneurial learning process. Research to date in this field has revealed that multiple pedagogies have been and are being used by entrepreneurial educators (McGowan and Rae, 2011; Lewis, 2011; Rae *et al.*, 2010; Gibb, 2011). It has also examined how students have engaged with these pedagogies and the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem, introducing the concept of opportunity centered entrepreneurship Rae and Woodliar-Harris (2012). The learner is placed at the centre of the entrepreneurial learning process, assuming a cyclical, iterative relational process between the learner and the learning environment as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The Learner Centred Entrepreneurial Learning Process**

Jones (2010, p.513) concluded that the entrepreneur educator does play a role in the learning process of the entrepreneurship student, and as educators we need to:

*“reconceptualise our role in the promoters of entrepreneurial graduates. Given that by and large we cannot easily influence the composition of our incoming cohorts, and that we cannot control the genuine application of the developed knowledge and skills, perhaps we are the cocoon makers. By this I mean we can largely control the environment our students operate within, but cannot guarantee that they will sprout wings and fly on graduation”.*

The context of this research is based ‘entrepreneurship’ as being one of eight key competences identified for lifelong learning by the European reference framework. The literature to date does acknowledge the role of the entrepreneurship educator in this lifelong learning process. However, the focus of this research is not on their role but more on the entrepreneurial learning process of the entrepreneurship educator themselves as opposed to their students. In order to understand the role of this process in becoming an entrepreneurship educator, it is necessary to review the literature in learning itself before reviewing the literature more specific to the entrepreneurship learning context.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *How People Learn*

Collectively, this review will help inform the exploratory empirical research presented in this paper, but more importantly form the basis of the proposed deeper analysis. One of the key contributors to the education and learning literature is that of Bloom. Bloom's taxonomy of learning was created in 1956 to promote higher forms of thinking in education, such as analyzing and evaluating concepts, processes, procedures, and principles rather than just remembering facts (rote learning). It is most often used when designing educational training, and learning processes. It is intended to assist educators and researchers in more precise discussion on the development of curricula and evaluation issues. This taxonomy of learning behaviours may be thought of as "the goals of the learning process." That is, after a learning episode, the learner should have acquired a new skill, knowledge, and/or attitude. The original taxonomy was perceived to be one dimensional and has been revised by Anderson *et al.* (2001) to represent a mega-cognitive approach to learning which notes that learning is not only about knowledge of cognition in general, but also requires an awareness and knowledge of one's own cognition. There are three levels of learning with level 1 referring to the assimilation of factual information; level 2 referring to the learning of how to transfer what has been learned from the present situation to another and level 3 referring to the ability to reflect on the past and question their way of doing things with a view to stimulating change (Cope and Watts, 2000). The concept of learning has developed over time from the behavioural aspects, to the cognitive, to the socio cultural and to the practice based view (Higgins and Elliott, 2011). The notion of combining on the one hand learning through thinking with learning through action on the other has led to the theory of experiential learning (Lewis, 2011; Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1977; Kolb, 1984; Scott *et al.*, 2012; Wilson and Beard, 2003).

The Transformatory Approach to learning defines effective learning "as learning that leads to change at the level of the individual, the group, the organisation and ultimately society", (Askew and Carnell, 1998, p.8). Mezirow as cited in Castelli

(2011, p.16) defined it as “an approach to teaching based on promoting change, where educators challenge learners to critically question and assess the integrity of their deeply held assumptions about how they relate to the world around them”. It recognises the role of the professional development of the educator as a key input to this change. According to Vygotsky, (1978) learning may be viewed as a social activity requiring access to the knowledge of the key people involved and the social nature of their endeavour. Kolb (1984) believed that we must create an environment conducive to learning through ways of knowing and ways of understanding. Ways of knowing are named as apprehension and comprehension. Apprehension links to knowing something by experiencing it and comprehension links to knowing about something in a theoretical manner. Ways of understanding refer to intention and extension with intention being linked to reflection and observation while extension is linked to actually trying it out.

Wilson and Beard (2003) have built on Kolb’s work and of Piaget (1977) creating six tumblers in the Learning Combination Lock (LCL). Each tumbler has a number of elements within it which include:

1. Places and Elements – the different environments which challenge and encourage learning
2. The Milieu – strategies that may be used to help the learner to learn, face challenges, and to be realistic
3. Senses – acknowledging their presence and role in the learning process and how to incorporate them
4. Emotions – acknowledging that learning can be enhanced when people discover things for themselves through their own emotional intelligence,
5. Forms of Intelligence – applying Gardner’s principle of the application of multiple intelligences in one’s learning
6. Ways of Learning – considered and contemplated ways of learning are more effective for the learner and for those providing the learning rather than those randomly selected

The model has been designed and built on the notion of experiential learning to provide a broader perspective on learning. There is a need to empirically test the model to understand its role and value to learning in general and more specifically to entrepreneurial learning and the entrepreneurship educator. This will form the basis of the deeper analysis proposed by this research. However, in order to apply this model to the entrepreneurial learning process of the entrepreneurship educator it is also necessary to review the literature on entrepreneurial learning.

### 3. *Entrepreneurial Learning*

Gibb and Cotton (1998) state that with regard to entrepreneurial learning, the emphasis should be on pedagogies that encourage learning: (i) by doing; (ii) through experience; (iii) by experiment; (iv) by risk taking and making mistakes; (v) through creative problem solving; (vi) by feedback through social interaction; and (vii) by role playing. Moreover, Cooper and Lucas (2007) highlight the importance and potential value of building elements of authentic experience into educational programmes if one wishes them to have enduring effects on entrepreneurial intent and self-efficacy levels. They assert that skills and attitudes associated with commercialisation are cultivated through “authentic experience” and enhanced within the workplace. Friedrich *et al.* (2010) propose an action-based model that is cognitive in character and applies different principles of action theory namely heuristics, learning by doing and providing differentiated feedback. It is imperative to employ innovative approaches to teaching and learning which stimulate students and develop their self-confidence and commitment to pursuing entrepreneurial careers. This, in turn, will enhance their self-efficacy namely their belief that they can successfully carry out the tasks that they will be required to perform if they are to become entrepreneurs (De Noble *et al.* 1999; Cooper and Lucas, 2007).

Wing Yan Man (2006, p.309) did find that there are six behavioural patterns of entrepreneurial learning which include “actively seeking learning opportunities; learning selectively and purposely; learning in depth; learning continuously; improving and reflecting upon experience; and successfully transferring prior experience into current practices”. He developed a conceptual model which

separated the learning based on the entrepreneur's experiences and their entrepreneurial knowledge which were continuously being transformed by factors which influenced the transformation process through previous experiences, predominant logic or reasoning and/or career orientation.

The overview of the learning and entrepreneurial learning literature would appear to converge towards an emphasis on the value of experiential based learning. However, whilst the literature does provide ample research on the role of the entrepreneurial learning process in a student becoming an entrepreneur it does not do so for its role in becoming an entrepreneurship educator, (Askew and Carnell, 1998, p.8).

### *3.1 Placing the entrepreneurship educator at the centre of the entrepreneurial learning process*

Entrepreneurship based research has made reference to the teachers of entrepreneurship and has identified a number of gaps in doing so. Penaluna *et al.* (2012) found that educators of entrepreneurship did have personal experience of setting up a business themselves, did have their own personal networks within the educator community and engaged with feedback on an ongoing basis from employers and past students. However, they recommended that future research should seek to understand 'better' the views and reflections of the educators of entrepreneurship and what they believe it 'should and could be' (2012, p. 173).

Pihie and Bagheri (2011) used a descriptive design to measure the entrepreneurial self efficacy of 315 teachers and 3,000 students in Malaysia. They concluded that it was higher amongst the teachers of entrepreneurship than the students. However, they recommended that future research should seek to investigate the sources of information that construct the self efficacy of the teacher and "to measure entrepreneurship teachers' efficacy in teaching entrepreneurship as a specific subject and with a scale specifically developed for measuring entrepreneurship teaching self-efficacy" (Pihie and Bagheri, 2011, p. 1077).

Wilson (2012) found that students who engaged in work placement during their studies were more empathetic in their reflective writing than those who did not engage in work related placements. There is little evidence in the literature as to how many, if any, entrepreneurship educators engage in relevant work placement and/or industry placements or secondments. Research conducted by [Kabongo](#) and [McCaskey](#) (2011), on the characteristics of entrepreneurship educators concluded from a single case study of the faculty of UCAS – that the entrepreneurship educators did in the majority have experience of being an entrepreneur. However, the study did not identify how these educators reflected on how this experience contributed to the development of their entrepreneurial mindset or their teaching and relationship with their students in the learning environment, or simply what it meant to be an entrepreneurship educator.

The literature does show that innovation has been applied to the teaching of entrepreneurship addressing different intelligences, but with less attention being given to the concept of the multiple intelligences of the entrepreneur educator. Gardner (1983) has identified seven intelligences in his work indicating that different students learn differently and the need for the educator to be empathetic to same. Gardner (1983, p.43) states that “interpersonal intelligence is the capacity to understand the intentions, motivation, and desires of other people”. While the importance of studying emotions in connection with education has been highlighted in the fields of entrepreneurship (Rae, 2005), there is little evidence of the qualities of the empathetic entrepreneurship educator, although Pittaway (2007) emphasises the need for ‘emotional exposure’ for effective learning.

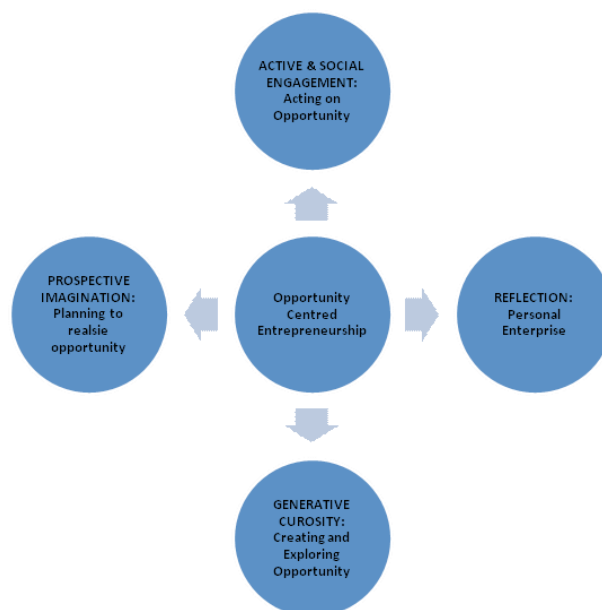
More specifically, this indicates the lack of evidence which shows how entrepreneurship educators can learn to empathise with the entrepreneur. This leads to the question if empathy can be taught? Stein (1989) believed that empathy is something that happens to us, it is given to us indirectly through our process of experiencing. According to Davis (1990, p.32), “promoting attitudes and behaviours such as self-awareness, non judgemental positive regard for others, good listening skills, and self-confidence are suggested as important in the development of



clinicians who will demonstrate an empathetic willingness”. However, there is limited availability in the literature to date of reflections from entrepreneurship educators on how they have developed empathy as teachers of entrepreneurship and how it has facilitated and/or informed their entrepreneurial practices and learning processes.

Entrepreneurial practices have been inevitably and inextricably related to socially embedded experiences and relations (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). Entrepreneurship research supports the position that entrepreneurial learning requires experiential learning which Kolb (1984, p.301) defines as “a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”. Cope and Watts, (2000) argue for double loop learning whereby critical events can generate a renewed understanding or a redefinition of an entrepreneur’s processes and strategies. To date the focus has been on the students’ redefinition of these processes and strategies. However, it also has the capacity to trigger considerable changes in the educators’ self-awareness and self-efficacy, thus leading to a growth in research exploring how similar learning and cognition theories impact the entrepreneurial practices of entrepreneurship educators. According to Rae (2002; 2007) an entrepreneurship educational system requires an opportunity centred approach as outlined in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Opportunity Centred Entrepreneurship**



Source: Adapted from Rae and Woodler-Harris (2012).

This paper represents a small exploratory study based on a literature review and on four interviews across the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels to help establish a platform for a deeper analysis at the tertiary education level. It seeks to begin to unveil what it actually means to be an entrepreneurship educator. It aims to initiate the process of asking entrepreneurship educators to centre themselves in the entrepreneurial learning process by asking them to reflect on who and what experiences and practices have influenced their entrepreneurship learning to date. It is the foundation of a proposed deeper analysis which intends to use Wilson & Beard's (2003) learning combination lock to develop the typology (ies) of an entrepreneurship educator.

#### **4. Methodology**

Hindle (2004, p.577) stated that qualitative approaches are “demonstrably underrepresented in entrepreneurship research”. Some of the reasons identified behind this trend include the production of descriptive research and research of doubtful standard as argued by Neergaard and Uihøi (2007). According to Ozmon and Craver as cited in Hannon (2006, p.307) “understanding philosophy does provide a valuable base to help us to think more clearly” and in this case that is referring to entrepreneurship educators. Qualitative research based in a post modernist paradigm recognises that there are many different types of knowledge and values local or popular knowledge alongside professional knowledge. Foucault (1980) recognised this through use of the term, “knowledges”. This use of the plural acknowledges that local, personal knowledges acquired through lived experience and personal action and then ascribing meaning to that action, is valuable. It is these local knowledges of entrepreneurship educators which this qualitative research will access.

The proposed deeper study will employ a qualitative methodology in its research, contributing to the value of this approach in entrepreneurship based literature. A small sample of entrepreneurship educators will be identified based on a pre-determined list of qualifying criteria. The first meeting will introduce and carry out the Pictor Technique to allow the participant to graphically illustrate who has contributed

to their career as an entrepreneurship educator to date. This will be used as the basis for subsequent follow up interviews using the narrative analysis to acquire rich data based on the experiences and reflections of the entrepreneurship educators. Effective reporting on the acquired information will require high levels of reflective engagement by the respondent and the researcher (Castelli, 2011; Ikavalko *et al.*, 2012).

The Pictor technique devised by Nigel King at Huddersfield University was used for this exploratory study to help the participants to begin to reflect on who has influenced their entrepreneurship teaching to date. Using this technique, the participant is asked “to choose a case of collaborative working in which he or she is, or has been involved... they are provided with a set of arrow-shaped cards or adhesive notes and asked to lay them out on a large sheet of paper in a manner that helps them tell their story” (King *et al.*, 2013, p.4). By asking participants to write the names of people involved in the collaborative working, when the researcher is asking them to tell their story, the relationships with these people comes into focus. Pictor is based on phenomenological understandings of personal construct theory and so fits well with the proposed narrative analysis, as Pictor can be used in data collection but not in analysis.

## **5. Exploratory Work To Date**

The researcher has initiated some exploratory research with four entrepreneurship educators across the education spectrum from primary to third level. The candidates were identified based on their involvement in the delivery of an entrepreneurship education programme. Each candidate was invited by email. It was explained to them that it was exploratory research linked to a PhD in entrepreneurship education and that the interview would explore their experience as an entrepreneurship educator to date and would last sixty to ninety minutes in total. Due to confidentiality, the completed diagram for each candidate cannot be presented here. However, a summary of the key insights from the interviews led by the Pictor technique is presented below.

### 5.1 *Reflections from the primary school educator*

The primary school teacher interviewed was female, in her early thirties, with a Bachelor of Education and currently studying for a master's in education. While she went for a 'safe job' as a primary teacher she has always worked at weekends and over the holiday months from a very young age. Interestingly, she only identified four influences on her entrepreneurial mindset with only one relationship being pointed directly towards her – that was her mother. Her mother had a strong influence on her attitude '*to try new things*'. Although her mother was a teacher, she also invested in property as a hobby because it generated extra income for the household. It also kept her '*mind active and in touch with the real world*', allowing her to engage with different people and with different experiences.

The respondent for this study believed that this encouraged her to engage with others and to ask for help if she needed it. She always had an 'appetite' for trying new things and introducing new programmes to the pupils. She sought new challenges continuously which led her to introducing a new programme for primary school pupils to her class. The programme introduced her to many business people and allowed her to engage the class in an entrepreneurial event while simultaneously teaching them maths (research and financials), English (writing the business plan), confidence building through the presentations and many more.

Due to the programme she has become aware of and known to the local business community and she identified them as people she now consults for opinions and invites them in to talk to her new class each year. In her words '*her network is expanding all of the time*' and both her pupils and she have '*expanded their learning space*'.

Others who have influenced her have included a friend who is in business and other entrepreneur related events on television. She believes in doing things well and is not concerned about the opinions of her peers – what matters to her is '*watching the kids develop – their time to shine*'. She also feels it allows her to engage more with the parents and '*it is great when they thank me at the end and when the kids*

*themselves take the time to thank me – and this feels great!’*

She is currently getting involved in other new initiatives in craft education. This will require her to learn new things – but to her *“this is great – if I am learning then the kids are learning and each time I am taking a little risk – but it always pays back – guess I am behaving like an entrepreneur”*. She also disclosed that she *“believes that there is more than one way to solve a problem- so again I guess it helps my entrepreneurial mindset – I just never thought of it like that before”*.

## **5.2 Reflections from the secondary school educator**

The secondary school teacher was female, in her early fifties, and delivered business classes to adult learners in one school and to second level students in another school. She has a Bachelor of Commerce, a Higher Diploma in Education and Masters in Education.

This educator spoke very much about the influence of a specific young entrepreneur programme on her entrepreneurial competencies. In particular the assigned business mentor to her class was *“tremendous, always at the end of a phone and so helpful and informative – it was the real thing- real world”*. She also made reference to the educator training attached to the programme which was *“fantastic, real time and was a great experience as it required us as a group of educators to work as a team and come up with our own business idea. We normally worked in silos, on our own – this was great and then being able to pitch to other group members was fantastic. I actually realised how scary it could be for the students but also how much fun it was – we laughed at every session. But I must admit – I was competitive – I wanted our team to win – I found myself using examples of the football team I follow in the class room – getting the students to think outside the box – being entrepreneurial I suppose?”*

She also made reference to her mother and her brother whom she referred to many times as helping her to solve problems. The principal in the school was very encouraging but it was also the first time that she had received ‘praise and support’

from her teaching colleagues and 'it felt great'. She commented on this new relationship with the parents and how they became much more involved. She now knows the demands of an entrepreneur and it is about '*survival of the fittest*' – but at the end of the day she is a 'teacher' and she "*must focus on exams and making sure the students get the points!*" She enjoys teaching entrepreneurship but at the "*bottom line I am a teacher and I need to be able to work in both head spaces!*"

### 5.3 Reflections from the third level educator

The third level educator was female, in her early forties, an accountant by profession with a Bachelor of Commerce. She had worked in private practice before becoming a third level lecturer and currently operates her own practice part time. She placed herself at the centre of the page and deliberately placed all of the arrows at the side of the image and described them as representing her '*right hand men*' and people whom she '*looks up to*' on a professional and personal level. These people have influenced her entrepreneurial mindset and competencies.

Her father encouraged her to "*believe in her ability, to take pride in her work, to work hard and she believes she has consumed his ability to have endless energy*". Her friends on her right hand side share their stories and experiences of '*real world experience- taking risks, being creative and always encouraging*'. She has experienced many what she described as '*real life experiences*' with them and they were willing to offer their support and advice and criticism as required. She made particular reference to the '*honesty and trust*' between them and how they "*continuously encourage me to flex my creative muscle – being an accountant I can ignore or play down my creativity. They encourage me to be curious and to try new things. This was one of the reasons why I became involved in teaching entrepreneurship and now I am converted – I now love and preach the gospel of entrepreneurship where and whenever I can*".

The other people she identified as being influential in her entrepreneurial experiences were referred to as her Head of Department and colleague. She began her description of their involvement by saying "*my attitude is that it is possible to*

*drive to Dublin on the M7 or one can take the old road and experience a tougher drive, BUT never knowing what is around the next bend – hmmm this is much much more exciting*". Her head of department whom she described as not being *'the typical academic head of department'* was more informal and encouraged her to take on a new module in entrepreneurship and *"encouraged me to see it as an opportunity and it was!"* The colleague she now refers to as her *'mentor'* is continuously in touch with her and now engaging in more entrepreneurship projects and events. She has learned to understand the power of her networks and is now including them more in her modules. She is also considering undertaking a level 9 module on entrepreneurship and in fact exhibited a broad smile commenting that *"I thought I would never see myself doing a course in entrepreneurship – it is now a natural progression of my learning journey"*.

Finally, she identified her students as being *'extremely inspirational'* in developing her entrepreneurial mindset and competencies. She actually referred to them as having *"rescued me and I feel that I am now rescuing new students on the strength of my experiences to date. Through discussion and debate we solve many problems – and what I have really realised is the power of 'storytelling' in the learning process – I ask the students to tell me their story and I believe that it in turn means that I place trust in them to think for themselves and to learn from their own experiences. I had never used story telling in talking with my clients (or so I thought) or in class with my finance class – now I do – and in fact I like to write for myself and am creative and am now empathising with my own internal passion and love of new stories – new journeys"*. Witnessing the brightness in her face and facial movements added further credibility to this revelation. She also made reference to her mother who encouraged her to always ask questions and *"I do – I do not have a master plan of where my entrepreneurial journey will travel but I am sure on board and want to encourage others to hop on – even the sceptics – remember that was me once upon a time....."*

#### *5.4 Reflections from the entrepreneur who became an entrepreneurship educator*

The entrepreneur who became an entrepreneurship educator was in his late forties with a background in hospitality and significant experience in setting up different businesses. He came from a family business where he developed a sense of working hard and being creative from a young age. His placing of the arrows on his key influences “*fell naturally*” with his family being there at the start and still there and described them as the ‘*ge*’. He was introduced to the concept of ‘*reflection*’ where his mother would encourage he and his siblings to “*never be bored, think of something to do, be creative, read that book, tell me what you think about that*”. He attributes this to be the beginning of his ability to think, to develop new ideas and to be solution focused.

He refers to his wife as being a very significant part of his entrepreneurial journey describing her as a “*more processed person and...completer, where I would be more of the risk taker, idea generator... the visionary*”.

Similar to the entrepreneurship educators he made reference to the importance of the external influences in his academic education and in particular the manager of the business where he completed his work placement in university. He described the business as being at the “*cutting edge of technology and training*” with a manager who believed in “*getting the right people in place and to invest in training and developing*” each one of them. This manager became a true role model, who took time to sit and explain to him why he did what he did and the “*impact it has on the individual*” and importance of training people if you wanted to succeed.

He also spoke of his passion for reading and learning and its importance in business. It helped him to “*think outside the box*” but yet with a need to establish a blueprint and a map for success. This approach led him to win awards for his blueprints. The notion of being creative and innovative was inspired by his role models and mentor from his work placement at university. “*When I set up a business ... I just love getting under the bonnet in a different business ... establishing*



*where a business is and their growth journey and maybe help them to get to the next stage”.*

His experience in the power of establishing relationships in setting up a business is one which he believes is underpinned by acknowledging the need for all parties to be part of the learning process. *“So I start a relationship with, .... I certainly can bring something to the table, but actually if I have something to learn and ...acknowledge that I am actually going to learn as well, then we can learn together and that combined learning will shape this”.*

He made reference to the power of networking and how he was introduced to it early in his life. This was truly important to him as it provided him with inspiration when setting up a business and the support of *“people who went beyond the pale to help me which was great, and you know, provided inspiration because, convinced me that what I was saying about business at that stage was the right thing”.* Now as an educator he continues to encourage people to *“network effectively and to target, to seek out, seek out people who you feel would inspire you or you can learn from and try and get time with them”.* Other business people have inspired him with their use of *“the effectual process which means that, you know, you need to have the ability and the flexibility to sort of assess where you are right now, look at the resources you have available to you and on the basis of that, to make a decision, so if you’re sticking to a rigid, rigid, process, you won’t do that”.*

Finally, when asked why he had not in the interview referred to himself as a lecturer, he replied *“I think that’s a label for an educator or an imparter of encouragement, an imparter of knowledge. As is a teacher, as is trainer, as is a consultant, as it a mentor, as is a coach, you know, you know they all sort of do that. All my life I have either one-to-one or one-to-group encouraged or imparted knowledge or trained or taught in a very formal way, like running .....entrepreneurship modules ...with course work and exam...formal way .....to the more informal sort of mentoring or non-exec directorship activity and whatnot”.*

## 6. Conclusions

These early findings suggest that the participants enjoyed taking the time to reflect on their experiences and entrepreneurship influencers. They were surprised as to how much they learned about themselves by taking the time to reflect on who had influenced their entrepreneurial learning to date. They relayed their reflections in the telling of multiple stories and the recalling of numerous events and incidents of influence and spoke of the many people who influenced them from very different parts of their lives. Analysis of the data collected did lend itself towards a preliminary application of Wilson and Beard's (2003) six tumblers as shown below:

1. *Places and Elements*: All respondents indicated engagement in multiple learning environments albeit unique to their experience
2. *The Milieu*: All respondents expressed the need to adapt to the needs of their learners and themselves
3. *Senses*: All acknowledged their presence and role in the learning process and how to incorporate them
4. *Emotions*: They certainly spoke with emotion and enthusiasm and exhibited signs of empathising with the entrepreneur, acknowledging that learning can be enhanced when people discover things for themselves through their own emotional intelligence
5. *Forms of Intelligence*: All of those interviewed had a third level qualification but are continuously learning through formal mechanisms and/or through new experiences and engagements. It was commented that *'being involved in entrepreneurship education allowed them to interact differently with the participants and described it as a different experience to teaching other topics'*
6. *Ways of Learning*: Overall it was apparent that they found themselves wearing different hats at different times, being an idea generator at one point, a negotiator at another time, a designer at other times and a peace maker at other times. Most importantly they found themselves thinking on their feet and experiencing new learning all of the time – yet they also planned

their classes as well. They found themselves consulting with more people, feeling more of a team and building their own self confidence

This pilot exploratory work does indicate that entrepreneurship educators do engage with the entrepreneurial learning process. It did reveal evidence of the six tumblers of the learning combination lock amongst the respondents. However, there is a need to now engage with deeper narrative analysis through further reflective based interviews to understand its application more to the target group. There is a need to collect rich experience based data through such interviews with entrepreneurship educators across disciplines. The decision has been taken to concentrate on the third level sector as they focus on entrepreneurship on an ongoing basis while the primary and secondary school educators are driven by new initiatives which may be or may not be linked with entrepreneurship. It will be necessary to use video in the data collection process in order to effectively capture the emotions expressed as the participants reflect and tell their story. Deeper questioning will seek to understand more about what it means to be an entrepreneurship educator and develop the typology (ies) of an entrepreneurship educator. This will allow more educators to use the learning combination lock to reflect on their engagement with entrepreneurial learning process and how it can help them to become an entrepreneurship educator.

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