

# How Effective is Experiential Learning in Entrepreneursh Education? A Review of The Concept and Its Application

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## ABSTRACT

The challenge of effectively teaching entrepreneurship and fostering students' entrepreneurial skills and business initiation has drawn significant attention. As the solution for this issue, experiential learning system (ELS), a pedagogical strategy in which students learn by doing, becomes more prevalent technique of teaching entrepreneurship. Therefore, this research uses the literature review method to analyze the effectiveness of using ELS in implementing entrepreneurship development programs. This research was carried out by collecting relevant literature sources, analyzing the content of the literature, and compiling the findings in the literature into a comprehensive understanding framework. The systematic literature review approach used in this study can provide identification and construct what further research needs to be done in the future including determining the characteristics of the variables that influence the phenomenon being studied. In conclusion, The findings demonstrate that experiential learning positively impacts the development of entrepreneurial competencies and skills. Nevertheless, while various experiential activities offer distinct advantages for entrepreneurship education, they also pose challenges that need to be addressed. Thus, the recommendations given through this paper are the implementation of Experiential Learning in Entrepreneurship Education could be developed with the interdisciplinary integration (engineering, health, art, and science) practice, implement the usage of technology and AI, and drive the business mission into social entrepreneurship.

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## Introduction

The doubts about how to effectively teach business to undergraduate students persist, as the skills and competencies needed in the business world are difficult to achieve through traditional classroom instruction, which often involves passive student participation. In Indonesia, despite the growing demand for entrepreneurship education, studies indicate that its implementation in higher education institutions has not been fully effective (Ghina, 2014; Larso et al., 2012). Inefficiencies stem from a limited understanding of appropriate methods to teach and foster new entrepreneurs (Rumijati, 2017; Priyanto, 2012). Most courses still rely heavily on teacher-centered approaches, with minimal active involvement from students.

Entrepreneurship, however, is a dynamic learning process that demands motivation, creativity, and the ability to develop and implement new business ideas. It requires various skills, such as risk calculation, team formation, resource management, business planning, and opportunity recognition (Kolb, 2014). Given this complexity, educators have a crucial role in developing students' skills in discovery, planning, and managing business ideas under conditions of uncertainty (Neck and Greene, 2011).

To address these challenges, more modern approaches such as Experiential Learning (EL) have emerged. EL emphasizes learning by doing, encouraging students to try, experiment, and learn from their experiences. According to Othman et al. (2012), cultivating an entrepreneurial spirit in students is essential for effective entrepreneurship education. Several scholars support the use of EL in this context, highlighting its role in building entrepreneurial skills and attitudes (Nabi et al., 2017; Neck & Greene, 2011; Politis, 2005). Kolb's (2014) Experiential Learning Theory explains that knowledge is created through a cycle of experience, reflection, thinking, and action. Research by Cervantes-Guzmán (2021) also shows that EL significantly influences students' entrepreneurial intentions, while Mason and Arshed (2013) demonstrate that EL exposes students directly to real-world entrepreneurial challenges.

Further studies strengthen this argument, showing that EL contributes to business start-up development, career planning, and entrepreneurial decision-making through risk management, strategic action, and ethical business practices (Karia et al., 2015; Ferreira, 2020; Mansoori, 2017; Awasyeh & Bonfiglo, 2017; Morris & König, 2021). Thus, integrating EL into entrepreneurship education is highly relevant, particularly for Indonesia's goal of producing entrepreneurial graduates who are ready to develop businesses and create job opportunities.

By applying EL, students directly engage with real-world business challenges, such as planning

strategies, marketing, and management, thereby deepening their entrepreneurial competencies (Kolb, 1984; Manimala & Thomas, 2017). Moreover, EL encourages students to solve problems within their environment, further strengthening their entrepreneurial mindset (Fromm et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, research on the application of EL in Indonesian universities remains limited. Addressing this gap, the present study conducts a systematic literature review to examine the use and impact of EL in entrepreneurship education within Indonesia. The study aims to organize existing knowledge, connect practices and outcomes, and offer insights that can be adapted across higher education institutions.

## Method

This study adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to analyze the effectiveness of the Experiential Learning System (ELS) in entrepreneurship development programs. The SLR method enables the identification of key research findings, gaps, and influential variables, as well as the construction of a conceptual framework to guide future research and practice in entrepreneurship education (McKillop et al., 2020). The following steps outline the research process:

### 1. Formulating Research Design and Questions

The initial stage involved formulating specific research questions and defining the objectives and scope of the review. This step ensured that the investigation was focused on analyzing the implementation and effectiveness of ELS in entrepreneurship learning development.

### 2. Identifying Relevant Literature Sources

Relevant databases and search terms were determined to locate scholarly articles and studies related to ELS and entrepreneurship education. Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to select literature that aligned with the research focus.

### 3. Documenting Search Strategy

All decisions regarding the search process, including keyword selection, database choice, and filtering criteria, were systematically recorded to ensure transparency and replicability of the review process.

### 4. Reviewing and Selecting Literature

In this stage, the collected sources were critically assessed to ensure their quality and relevance. Only literature that met the established criteria for reliability and academic rigor was included for further analysis.

## 5. Data Extraction and Analysis

The final stage involved extracting key information from the selected studies, synthesizing findings, identifying patterns and relationships among variables, and constructing a comprehensive framework. This analysis also facilitated the identification of research gaps and the proposal of directions for future studies.

Through this structured process, the study aims to contribute to the theoretical development and practical enhancement of entrepreneurship learning by leveraging the experiential learning approach.

## Results and Discussion

### Foundation of Experiential Learning (EL)

Experiential learning possesses a substantial historical background that encompasses several educational ideologies and techniques. The notion of acquiring knowledge through firsthand encounters has historical origins, but the formalisation and methodical investigation of experiential learning as an educational methodology became more prominent during the 20th century.

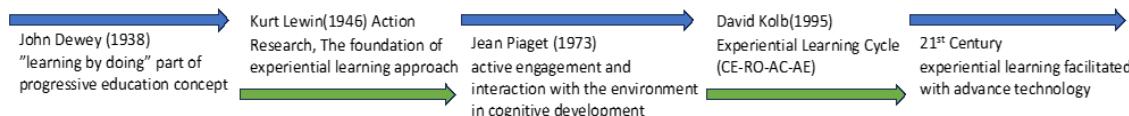


Fig 1: Historical Highlight of Experiential Learning

#### 1. John Dewey and Progressive Education

Dewey's progressive education philosophy emphasized learning by doing, where students actively engage with real-world situations, solve problems, and reflect on their experiences. He believed that education should be relevant to students' lives and should prepare them for active participation in democratic societies (Ramsgaard, 2018).

#### 2. Kurt Lewin and Action Research

Kurt Lewin contributed to the development of experiential learning through his work on action research. Lewin emphasized the importance of learning through action, reflection, and collaboration. His action research model involved a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection, which laid the foundation for experiential learning approaches (Ramsgaard, 2018).

#### 3. Jean Piaget and Constructivism

Jean Piaget contributed to the experiential learning discourse by emphasizing the role of

active engagement and interaction with the environment in cognitive development. Piaget's constructivist theories highlighted the importance of hands-on experiences in constructing knowledge and understanding (Ramsgaard, 2018).

#### 4. David Kolb and the Experiential Learning Cycle

David Kolb expanded on the ideas of Dewey and Lewin and developed the experiential learning cycle, a model that outlines a continuous process of learning through experience. The cycle consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb's work highlighted the interconnectedness of these stages and the importance of reflective practice (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

#### 5. 21st Century Innovation and Technology

The 21st century witnessed a surge in innovative approaches to experiential learning, facilitated by advancements in technology. Virtual simulations, gamified learning, and online platforms offer immersive and interactive experiences that simulate real-world scenarios. Thus, experiential learning is an integral part of modern educational practices. It is employed across various disciplines, from traditional classrooms to professional training and entrepreneurship education, with a continued emphasis on active engagement, reflection, and the application of knowledge in practical contexts (Healey & Jenkins, 2007).

John Dewey's work to identify the "theory of experience" became the inspiration for the idea of EL, despite the fact that it is based on a variety of ideas (Kolb & Kolb, 2017, p. 10). Dewey believed that the best way to learn is through the learners' reflective thought and activity (Miettinen, 2000). Theoretically, according to Kolb, "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). The idea discusses the four processes of acting, observing, thinking, and planning as a cyclical model of learning.

Every phase of EL supports the entire experience of learning. The learner engages in and experiences the action in a field or lab setting, or generally outside of the classroom, during the doing stage, also known as the concrete experience (Healey & Jenkins, 2007). The reflective observation stage, during which the learner considers his or her experience, is also known as the observing stage (Healey & Jenkins, 2007). The learner gives a model or hypothesis of what will be noticed during the thinking stage, also known as abstract conceptualization (Healey & Jenkins, 2007). The learner plans to study a model or theory in relation to an event during the planning stage, sometimes referred to as active experimentation (Healey & Jenkins, 2007). Both students and teachers will undoubtedly

benefit from the experiential learning methodology. The lessons gained from the viewpoint of the students are significant. These lessons have included, but are not limited to:

- a. Increased capacity to connect theory and practice through critical thinking (Kolb & Kolb, 2017)
- b. Possibilities to engage in more active learning than passive learning (Canziani et al., 2015)
- c. Real-world experiences (Losapio & Koustas, 2017; Pittaway & Cope, 2007),
- d. opportunities to get quick feedback, take part in group discussions, and experience collaboration towards a common objective (Meyers & Jones, 1993)

Additionally, during the EL process, students are able to develop ideas in their own thoughts based on their new knowledge and findings (Barab et al., 2002). A crucial component of entrepreneurial learning is concrete experience, which fosters a business-oriented perspective, motivates successful entrepreneurship, and abstracts conceptualization to allow students to test their theories in practice (Lindberg et al., 2017).

In the other hand from the viewpoint of a teacher, a reflective approach to work serves as an example of behaviors that will promote continual improvement, the growth of teaching abilities, and knowledge of various learning styles (Sharlanova, 2004). The benefits of Kolb's idea are best summed up as follows:

- a. Offers ready-to-use application instructions.
- b. Provides instructions for the necessary variety of instructional strategies.
- c. Establishes a strong link between theory and practice.
- d. Enables in rationalizing the way that learning styles are combined so that learning can be optimized.

David A. Kolb, laid the groundwork for the development of Experiential Learning Theory (ELT). Kolb's hypothesis is widely acknowledged and has exerted a significant influence on educational methods and theories pertaining to the process by which individuals acquire knowledge through experiential learning. The fundamental tenets of Experiential Learning Theory are centered on a cyclical framework encompassing four key stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active exploration. The following analysis provides a more in-depth examination of these fundamental components (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

1. Concrete Experience (CE). Concrete Experience involves direct engagement with a specific situation or activity, where an individual actively participates in an experience. This experience

may encompass a genuine occurrence, a simulated scenario, or a practical activity. Concrete experiences serve as the foundational basis for the acquisition of knowledge, enabling humans to engage with novel circumstances, emotions, and obstacles.

2. Reflective Observation (RO). Reflection encompasses a deliberate and analytical process of contemplating and examining the events and feelings connected to a particular experience. Reflective observation facilitates the examination of individuals' reactions, patterns, and interactions, so enabling them to infer meaning and gain insights.

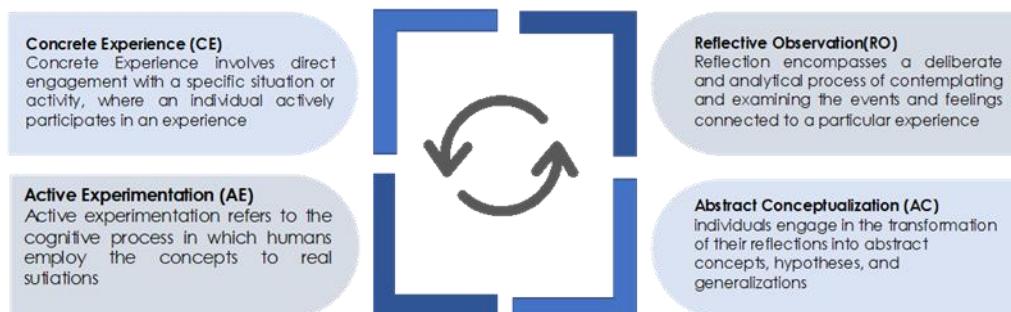


Fig 2: Circle of Experiential Learning (Kolb, 2014)

3. Abstract Conceptualization (AC). In the process of abstract conceptualization, individuals engage in the transformation of their reflections into abstract concepts, hypotheses, and generalizations. The experience is subjected to analysis in order to identify and extract fundamental principles that establish connections with pre-existing knowledge and frameworks. The process of abstract conceptualization serves as a means of connecting tangible experiences with theoretical comprehension, hence facilitating the development of more profound insights and comprehension.
4. Active Experimentation (AE). Active experimentation refers to the cognitive process in which humans employ the concepts and theories they have obtained from previous experiences and apply them to real situations. Researchers engage in the process of testing hypotheses, making informed decisions, and conducting experiments to explore various techniques, all of which are rooted in their abstract conceptualizations. Active experimentation encompasses the process of assuming risks, implementing novel tactics, and enhancing one's comprehension through the practical application of knowledge.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory suggests that effective learning occurs when individuals engage in all four stages of the cycle—CE, RO, AC, and AE—forming a continuous loop of learning and adaptation. This cyclical process encourages a holistic approach to learning that integrates

concrete experiences with reflective thinking and theoretical understanding. Kolb proposed that individuals may have preferred learning styles based on their dominant stages in the cycle. These styles include Diverging (emphasizing feeling and watching), Assimilating (emphasizing thinking and watching), Converging (emphasizing thinking and doing), and Accommodating (emphasizing feeling and doing).

Experiential learning emphasizes learning by actively engaging with experiences rather than passively receiving information (Lindberg et al., 2017). It suggests that knowledge is constructed through personal engagement and reflection. ELT highlights the importance of applying knowledge and concepts to real-world situations. Active experimentation encourages learners to test theories in practical contexts, promoting critical thinking and adaptability (Sukardi, et al, 2022). The cyclical nature of the experiential learning process emphasizes iterative learning, where individuals continuously refine their understanding through ongoing cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. ELT recognizes that effective learning involves both cognitive and affective dimensions. It encourages learners to consider emotions, values, and personal experiences alongside cognitive insights.

**Table 1.** Previous Research of Experiential Learning

Author(s)	Title	Method	Findings(s)
Dhliwayo (2016)	Experiential learning in Entrepreneurship education: A prospective model for South African tertiary institutions	Conceptual Research	appropriate experiential training can truly be integrated into entrepreneurship education in South Africa as in disciplines such as engineering or nursing
Mota and Galina (2023)	Experiential learning in entrepreneurship education: A systematic literature review	Systematic Literature Review	experiential learning has been recently used as an approach for entrepreneurial education as it contributes to a positive impact on entrepreneurial intention and to the development of entrepreneurial skills and competences

### ELS Method for Entrepreneurship Learning Development

According to Mandel and Noyes (2015), an effective Entrepreneurship Education activities should provide opportunity for interaction with mentors, clients, suppliers, and the team, as well as for reflection and the investigation of other entrepreneurial opportunities. Even if it can be difficult, it is feasible to gauge the effects of the exercises. A pre- and post-project survey on entrepreneurial

behavior, entrepreneurial intent, knowledge, inspiration, and resources can be used to measure the impact on learners (Ahmed et al., 2020). Alumni involvement and financial support for entrepreneurship projects can be used to measure the impact of Entrepreneurship Education at the university level (Ghobril et al., 2020). The field of entrepreneurship education is always changing, characterized by a dynamic array of trends that influence the strategies and techniques employed to foster entrepreneurial attitudes and abilities. This discussion explores the various trends in entrepreneurship education approaches, providing insights into the dynamic and evolving landscape of this study.

Within the domain of Social Entrepreneurship, a formidable surge of innovation motivated by a sense of purpose arises. This phenomenon represents the endeavor to engage in business activities that not only yield financial gains but also contribute to positive social and environmental outcomes (Awaysheh & Bonfiglio, 2017). As individuals develop their entrepreneurial skills to tackle urgent societal issues, a distinct group of individuals known as changemakers is emerging. These individuals are motivated by a strong dedication to creating a more improved world with the principles of sustainability and ethical entrepreneurship. The current generation of entrepreneurs exhibits a strong commitment to incorporating principles that emphasize the responsible management of the environment, ethical conduct in company operations, and the pursuit of sustainable growth (Hockerts, 2018). The current phenomenon drives the incorporation of ecological and ethical factors into the field of entrepreneurship education, cultivating a cohort of conscientious and accountable business leaders.

The Experiential Learning System (ELS) is a recognised approach within the field of entrepreneurship education that has a substantial impact on the development and transformation of prospective entrepreneurs (Ramsgaard, 2018). It plays a crucial role in enabling these individuals to cultivate visionary leadership skills within the corporate environment. Aspiring entrepreneurs engage in a domain where theoretical knowledge seamlessly integrates with practical application, giving rise to a transformative journey of personal and professional growth, innovation, and profound comprehension (Mason, 2013).

The fundamental concept of the ELS Method is around the proposition that education surpasses conventional teaching materials and lectures (Kolb, 2014). However, it places significant importance on the incorporation of active engagement, hands-on experiences, and reflective introspection as vital elements of the educational journey (Ferreira, 2020). Aspiring entrepreneurs commence a transformative process by initially immersing themselves in the embrace of Concrete

Experience. During this particular phase, individuals actively engage themselves in the invigorating realm of entrepreneurship, whereby they encounter the intricacies of market dynamics, consumer needs, and strategic decision-making (Fromm, 2021). Through active participation in immersive simulations, real-world problems, and startup projects, individuals are afforded the opportunity to directly encounter and effectively negotiate the essential components of entrepreneurship. The aforementioned factors encompass the diverse challenges and opportunities that emerge when theoretical knowledge and practical application intersect (Miettinen, 2000)..

The process of embarking on entrepreneurship serves as the basis for actively participating in Reflective Observation (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Entrepreneurs actively participate in a contemplative process, meticulously assessing their experiences to derive significant insights. With the supervision of mentors and experienced experts, individuals engage in a critical examination of their behaviours, outcomes, and the intricate interplay of cause and effect. The practise of reflection is a powerful technique that facilitates individuals in gaining a deeper understanding of their personal strengths, areas in need of improvement, and the ever-changing landscape of the corporate world.

The ELS Method incorporates the process of Abstract Conceptualization, which entails the synthesis of theoretical knowledge and practical experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).. Entrepreneurs adeptly amalgamate a wide array of knowledge, effectively merging their experiential proficiency with scholarly ideas, current market realities, and established industry norms. The process of synthesis enables individuals to develop a comprehensive set of theoretical tools, which they skillfully utilise to successfully navigate the complex terrain of entrepreneurship.

The core principle of the ELS Method is based on the application of Active Experimentation (Morris, 2021). Entrepreneurs, armed with a blend of practical expertise and theoretical frameworks, undertake ventures aimed at evaluating, enhancing, and introducing innovative concepts. Entrepreneurs commence concrete commercial ventures, modify their approaches in response to market feedback, and accept the dynamic relationship between risk and possible reward. The phenomenon of experiential learning follows a cyclical structure, in which each experiment functions as a spark for knowledge acquisition, motivating entrepreneurs to attain higher levels of skill and creativity.

During the duration of this undertaking, mentors play a crucial role as sources of guidance, offering a continuous stream of valuable insights, wisdom, and a supportive attitude (Motta& Galina, 2023). Educators play a multifaceted role that goes beyond traditional instruction, as they actively engage as collaborators in the entrepreneurial process. They provide support and guidance to

entrepreneurs as they navigate through the unfamiliar and unpredictable terrain of uncertainty and discovery. From an entrepreneurial learning and education standpoint, the breadth of entrepreneurship education surpasses conventional classroom environments. It involves a balanced integration of practical experience, reflective introspection, theoretical understanding, and proactive participation (Motta & Galina, 2023). The aforementioned transformational composition exhibits a profound impact on the domains of innovation and assumes a crucial position in influencing the course of organisational leadership.

Within the ever-evolving domain of entrepreneurship education, the Experiential Learning System (ELS) develops as a prominent approach that profoundly influences the growth and maturation of aspiring entrepreneurs, enabling them to become forward-thinking leaders within the corporate environment. Aspiring entrepreneurs enter a realm where theoretical knowledge smoothly merges with practical application, initiating a process of personal and professional development, innovation, and deep understanding.

Table 2. The Objective of Experiential Learning-Based Entrepreneurship Development

Developed Country	Developing Country
Advanced Industry Engagement	Localized Problem Solving
Cutting-Edge Technology and Innovation	Micro-Enterprise Development
Startup Incubators and Accelerators	Resourceful Innovation
Global Perspective and Market Expansion	Social Entrepreneurship and Impact
Social Impact and Sustainability	Local Mentorship and Collaboration
Research-Driven Innovation	Cultural Heritage and Tourism
Interdisciplinary Collaboration	Mobile and Digital Innovation
Digital and Virtual Experiences	Public-Private Partnerships
	Economic Diversification

sources: processed data

In the context of a developed country, the Experiential Learning System (ELS) method for entrepreneurship learning development takes on a distinctive form, leveraging the advanced resources, infrastructure, and ecosystem available in such settings (Motta & Galina, 2023). This method serves as a powerful catalyst, nurturing a new generation of entrepreneurs who are not only well-versed in theory but also adept at applying their knowledge in the complex landscape of developed economies. Through the ELS method, entrepreneurship learning in a developing country becomes a catalyst for social and economic transformation. Entrepreneurs emerge as drivers of local development, armed with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to create sustainable businesses, empower communities, and contribute to the progress of their nation. In the context of

a developing country, the Experiential Learning System (ELS) method for entrepreneurship learning development holds the potential to be a transformative force, empowering individuals to drive economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development (Amalia & Korflesch, 2021). The ELS method adapts to the unique challenges and opportunities present in developing countries, harnessing the spirit of entrepreneurship to uplift communities and foster inclusive progress.

### **ELS Method in Entrepreneurship Learning Development in Indonesia**

Entrepreneurial learning is a dynamic process that involves adapting experience and knowledge into practical learning outcomes (Koustas and Salehi, 2021). It is influenced by the context in which learning takes place, including teaching content and methods. Individuals have personal differences in producing different learning outcomes within social and organizational communities. The entrepreneurial learning process is influenced by opportunity recognition, exploitation, creativity, and innovation. Learning and value creation are the two main aspects of entrepreneurship, and allowing students to create value for external stakeholders supports their development of entrepreneurial competencies.

Experiential learning has become increasingly popular in Indonesian entrepreneurship education at the higher education level (Amalia & Korflesch, 2021). This type of learning emphasizes the importance of experience and involves students actively participating in an entrepreneurial company to create and adapt knowledge. Examples of experiential learning include mentoring and experiment-based learning at National Malang University, which involves group activities in a "mini-market" setting, and experiential-project-based learning at Ciputra University, which encourages personal selling, developing entrepreneurial ideas, acquiring feedback, and preparing statements into reality. In a broad sense, entrepreneurship competency encompasses the acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitude (Bell and Bell, 2020). The definition provided exhibits similarities with the competencies found in both general and entrepreneurial contexts, as discussed in previous studies. Study (Amalia & Korflesch, 2021) examines the impact of entrepreneurship education on the development of predicted entrepreneurial competences and skills among Indonesian students.

1. Proficiencies and skills in fundamental business and entrepreneurship knowledge
2. Proficiencies and skills in personality matters
3. Competencies and skills in marketing, selling, and business relationship
4. Competencies and skills in financial structuring and managing

In Indonesian entrepreneurship education, integrating various internal and external dimensions of universities can enhance its effectiveness. This can be achieved by formulating internal and external support, such as effective curriculum design, teaching methods, and facilities. (Amalia & Korflesch, 2021) also developed a systematic framework to portray and evaluate entrepreneurial learning within a university context, focusing on the relationships between key stakeholders (students, lecturers, and institutions) and their essential aspects, such as ability, opportunity, and incentive.

Some recent types of entrepreneurial learning in Indonesian higher education include mentoring, experiential mini-market, and personal selling approaches. Some studies suggest integrating internal and external university environments and institutional supports to enhance entrepreneurship education's teaching and learning process. These emerging types align with John Dewey's notion of "learning-by-doing," which means letting students learn to create value for others, which is then entrepreneurial education. Teaching methodology refers to creating actual value creation for others as a regular part of the curriculum or theoretically about how to create value to others.

## Conclusion

Experiential learning (EL) has a long-standing tradition rooted in various educational theories, emphasizing active engagement and reflection as key components of knowledge construction. In entrepreneurship education, however, traditional, theory-based, and teacher-centered methods still dominate, limiting the development of practical entrepreneurial skills. To address this gap, there is a growing need to prioritize EL approaches that encourage active participation and real-world experience.

The implementation of the Experiential Learning System (ELS) has shown particular effectiveness in both developed and developing countries. In developed economies, ELS leverages advanced resources, infrastructures, and ecosystems to produce entrepreneurs who are not only theoretically proficient but also capable of navigating complex and competitive markets. Conversely, in developing nations, ELS serves as a catalyst for social and economic transformation, equipping students with practical skills to create businesses, stimulate innovation, and foster community development.

Looking ahead, the future of entrepreneurship education should focus on expanding EL practices through interdisciplinary collaboration—integrating fields such as engineering, health, art, and

science. Furthermore, the adoption of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, and the promotion of social entrepreneurship initiatives are crucial to preparing students for the evolving demands of global entrepreneurship. Strengthening these areas will enhance the relevance and impact of experiential learning in shaping the next generation of entrepreneurs.

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