

Amplifying student voice: A grounded theory analysis of entrepreneurship education through work-integrated learning

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This study analyzes the role of student voices in entrepreneurship education within the framework of work-integrated learning (WIL). Through an empirical, qualitative study supported by grounded theory, the research captures insights from eighteen semi-structured interviews conducted with students at a private higher education institution in western Mexico. The findings reveal three central themes. First, individual work emphasizes personal growth through learning, engagement with reality, and meeting expectations. Second, group work focuses on communication, teamwork, and adaptability. Third, students develop entrepreneurial skills, including creativity, innovation, and decision-making. Student narratives are not only reported descriptively but also serve as the core analytical material from which key categories and theoretical insights were inductively developed. By examining how students' perspectives and reflections shape their entrepreneurial learning, this paper underscores the transformative potential of entrepreneurship education when aligned with WIL principles and offers practical recommendations for strengthening entrepreneurship education through the active integration of student voices.

Keywords: Student voice, entrepreneurship education, grounded theory, work skill development framework

The impact of entrepreneurship on the creation of new businesses has evolved significantly over recent years. New entrepreneurial ventures constantly emerge, offering innovative ideas and solutions tailored to an increasingly diverse and demanding market. A significant portion of entrepreneurship's success lies in the educational foundation behind it. Many educational institutions worldwide have embraced entrepreneurship education, integrating comprehensive courses into their curricula (Arruti, 2016). These courses, prevalent across disciplines, explore how to develop business ideas using diverse methodologies, assess their impacts, and teach strategies for targeting specific market niches. Students learn that the sustainability of a venture depends on skills such as creativity, leadership, teamwork, and adaptability (Paños Castro, 2017).

Entrepreneurship education programs are not only critical for professional readiness but also for personal growth and collaborative skills, particularly when aligned with work-integrated learning (WIL) principles (Eady et al., 2025). Despite the increasing emphasis on entrepreneurial education there remains a notable gap in understanding how students perceive and experience these programs, especially in varied educational contexts such as virtual environments.

This study also builds upon prior work by Bandaranaike et al. (2020), who introduced a WIL-based framework for developing and reflecting on entrepreneurial mindset attributes- such as initiative, adaptability, resilience, and opportunity recognition. These traits are increasingly recognized as key learning outcomes in entrepreneurial education. Revisiting this framework enables a deeper exploration of how mindset attributes can effectively structure academic WIL experiences. The study

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explicitly addresses existing gaps by examining student reflections and experiences within entrepreneurship courses that integrate WIL methodologies.

Entrepreneurship courses are no longer limited to business or economics students, who were traditionally the primary focus of entrepreneurial education. Today, these courses are designed for students across disciplines. For example, an engineer, lawyer, or nutritionist can apply their expertise to address market needs by leveraging their unique knowledge and skills. In response to this trend, higher education institutions (HEIs) have increasingly integrated entrepreneurship into their graduate profiles. Many HEIs now offer multiple entrepreneurship courses, each employing distinct methodologies. One example is business pitching to external experts—often potential investors—providing students with real-world opportunities for students to secure support for their innovative ideas (Volkman, 2004).

Berglund and Holmgren (2013) emphasize the broadening scope of entrepreneurship education, highlighting how cross-disciplinary approaches provide diverse students with practical skills to navigate real-work complexities. Notably, literature on students' perspectives specifically in entrepreneurship education contexts remains sparse, indicating an urgent need to capture and integrate student voices more systematically into curricular and pedagogical frameworks (Duran & Arias, 2015). In this study, student voice is understood not only as descriptive feedback, but as an active, reflective engagement through which students co-construct meaning and influence pedagogical practices. This aligns with calls for repositioning students as epistemic agents in educational design (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding, 2001).

The evolution of entrepreneurship education reflects the broader development of entrepreneurship as a discipline. What was once considered a subset of administrative processes has now expanded into a multidisciplinary field encompassing economic, social, and environmental dimensions. According to Drucker (1985), entrepreneurship involves “the process of obtaining benefits from new and valuable combinations of resources in an uncertain and ambiguous environment” (p. 31). This perspective underscores the need for creativity, innovation (Bóveda, 2004), and decision-making under uncertainty (Loli et al., 2010).

WIL offers a practical approach to entrepreneurship education by embedding real-world applications into academic curricula. Through WIL, students engage with external stakeholders, such as industry partners, government agencies, and business mentors, creating opportunities to apply entrepreneurial principles in authentic settings. These experiences allow students to refine critical skills, including problem-solving, adaptability, and leadership, which are essential for navigating complex entrepreneurial environments (Eady et al., 2025; Patrick et al., 2008) and emphasize the importance of student reflections in shaping high-quality WIL experiences, providing a framework to assess and enhance these programs.

Giving these insights, it is crucial to articulate how students interpret and value entrepreneurship education within a structured WIL context. This is especially relevant under unique conditions like virtual learning environments necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the primary research question guiding this study is: How do university students perceive entrepreneurship through the educational frameworks provided by higher education institutions within the WIL context? By employing grounded theory, this research seeks to capture nuanced student reflections and systematically analyze their experiences, providing valuable insights into pedagogical effectiveness and potential enhancements for future entrepreneurship education practices.

Entrepreneurship education in universities has evolved to emphasize creativity, problem-solving, and independence (Berglund & Holmgren, 2013). These skills are applicable across various sectors and prepare students for both employment and self-employment. Entrepreneurship programs integrate theoretical and practical components, engaging students, professors, and external agents, such as government institutions and business leaders, to guide real-world application (Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2014). By aligning entrepreneurship education with WIL principles, institutions foster a learning environment that bridges academic knowledge and practical experience, equipping students to address economic and social challenges effectively. Ultimately, entrepreneurship education supports economic and social growth, making it a cornerstone of WIL (Eady et al., 2025; Ndofirepi, 2022).

METHODOLOGY AND COURSE CONTEXT

This research complies with the guidelines established by the Declaration of Helsinki and ethical standards outlined in Articles 96, 100, and 101 of the Mexican General Health Law. The study was reviewed and approved according to institutional and national ethical requirements. Participation was voluntary and all responders provided informed consent. All data were collected anonymously and treated with strict confidentiality, for research purposes only. Ethics approval was explicitly granted by the Institutional Review Board of the participating university (ethic approval number# PCS011). Participants provided written informed consent, and interviews were recorded anonymously to protect confidentiality.

Although this course does not include a traditional employer-hosted work term, it was developed within a WIL framework. Students engaged in project-based learning supported by external employer mentorship. This included structured use of the CANVAS business model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2011) and real-case scenarios. One of the course's key components was the final pitch presentation, where students presented their business models to a panel of external stakeholders, such as mentors, entrepreneurs, and institutional guests. This activity simulated a real-world investment setting, allowing students to receive formative feedback. These components exposed students to professional expectations, feedback from practitioners, and applied entrepreneurship, decision-making while being exposed to different workplace environments and maintaining curricular alignment.

The research comprised several interconnected and interactive stages: theoretical grounding of entrepreneurship, direct engagement with students enrolled in the entrepreneurship courses, data collected through semi-structure interviews and data analysis. The cyclical nature of this approach allowed continuous refinement and deeper theoretical coherence, ensuring robust interpretation and theory development (Rodríguez et al., 1996; Urbina & Ovalle, 2016).

The researchers were affiliated with the institution offering the entrepreneurship courses but were not in an instructional or evaluative role for the participating students during the data collection period. This positional stance allowed for contextual familiarity and access, while maintaining ethical distance and minimizing bias. Researchers maintained neutrality by having no direct instructional or evaluative role during data collection, ensuring unbiased student responses. Given the focus on student voice, the researchers maintained a reflective approach to interpretation, ensuring that participants' experiences guided the analysis.

Data Collection Techniques

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection tool. These interviews balanced structured inquiry with conversational flexibility, enabling participants to freely articulate their

experiences and ideas while ensuring consistent exploration across key topics (Hernández, 2014; Ruiz-Olabuénaga, 2012). Interviews were conducted with 18 undergraduate students from a private higher education institution in Western Mexico, all of whom had completed two institutional entrepreneurship courses. Students come from various academic programs including business and engineer and health science reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the courses. These courses utilized the CANVAS business model framework, comprising nine components across customer segments, value propositions, infrastructure, and financial viability (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). This model facilitated students' development of innovative business concepts grounded in market realities, aligning their product strategies with clear mission, vision, and objectives (Cristancho-Triana et al., 2021).

Translations of participant interviews from Spanish to English were supported by the AI-based translation software DeepL. This tool ensured that contextual accuracy and nuance were preserved during the translation process, while maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Bilingual researchers verified translations to ensure contextual accuracy.

The interview protocol was structured around the work skill development (WSD) framework. This model identifies key workplace competencies such as, initiative, ingenuity, lifelong learning, self-management, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2015; Orozco-Quijano & Bandaranaike, 2017; Patrick et al., 2008). The interview guide is shown in Table 1.

Although the WSD framework guided our interview methodology, this study simultaneously integrates the entrepreneurial mindset research by Bandaranaike, et al. (2020) to conceptualize deeper affective and cognitive traits such as resilience, adaptability, initiative, and opportunity recognition. This dual-framework approach enabled the research to capture not only skill development but also how students internalize entrepreneurial identity and thinking.

It is important to note that Table 1 presents the design of the semi-structured interview instrument, not the results of data analysis. The questions based on the WSD model served as reflective prompts to elicit student perceptions about their learning experiences. The categories and themes that emerged from grounded theory coding are presented separately in Table 2, based on student responses to these structured prompts.

TABLE 1: Composition of the semi-structured interview based on work skill development.

No.	Work Skill Facet of WSD	Skill Reflection
1	Initiative	What is my role?
2	Inventiveness	What do I need?
3	Lifelong Learning	What am I learning from the entrepreneurship course?
4	Self-Management	How do I organize it?
5	Problem-Solving	How do I create?
6	Communication & Teamwork	How do I relate to others?

Analysis of the Information

This study employed grounded theory; a qualitative methodology rooted in symbolic interactionism. Grounded theory seeks to generate inductive theories grounded directly in the empirical data, providing robust explanations of social phenomena—in this case, students' entrepreneurial learning experiences (Bénard, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 2012). Its capacity to make sense of complex learning experiences in real-world contexts has made it particularly suitable for WIL studies that prioritize student perspective and inductive insight (Bytheway, 2018). The alignment of grounded theory with WIL principles allowed the research to bridge theoretical understanding with practical experiences. Specifically, semi-structured interviews explored students' engagement with entrepreneurial activities in realistic contexts, emphasizing their experiential learning and skill development.

Grounded theory, according to Strauss and Corbin (2012), refers to "the theory derived from systematically collected data and analyzed through a research process" (p. 13). This systematic approach ensures theories emerge authentically from empirical data (Motta & Rivera, 2023). Symbolic interactionism, as articulated by Blumer (1969), complements grounded theory by highlighting that meaning emerges through human interactions, continually shaped, and reshaped in everyday contexts (Espinosa, 1978; Gadea, 2018; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This theoretical underpinning emphasizes the dynamic and interpretative nature of students' entrepreneurial experiences.

In this study, students assigned value to their learning experiences not only based on the content delivered but also through interactions with peers, instructors, mentors, and external stakeholders. These interactions informed their evolving understanding of entrepreneurship, and identity. Symbolic interactionism thus provides a powerful lens through which to examine how students negotiated meaning and made sense of their academic and simulated workplace experiences, the combined use of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism enable this study to capture both the emergent structure and the situated meaning of student learning within the WIL context

The analytical approach was based on grounded theory emphasizing the inductive emergence of concepts, categories, and theoretical insights from data collected (Strauss & Corbin 2012). The analytical process involved three sequential yet iterative phases:

- 1- Open coding- Initial data analysis to identify distinct concepts and assign preliminary codes.
- 2- Axial Coding- Organization of codes into broader categories and exploration of relationships among subcategories.
- 3- Selective coding- Identification of code category and integrating the emergent theoretical insights into a coherent theoretical framework.

For instance, 'taking initiative' and 'time management' were initially coded separately and later grouped under the axial category 'autonomy,' demonstrating the iterative refinement process of grounded theory.

RESULTS

The initial phase of open coding was performed using ATLAS Ti V23 software which facilitated systematic coding and organization. This process identified three core concepts; individual work, referring to personal responsibilities and individual efforts within the course context; group work, highlighting collaborative interactions and team-based project development; and entrepreneurial skills encompassing competencies critical to entrepreneurial success and personal growth.

Table 2 clearly summarizes these findings, specifying frequencies (f) and density (d) of occurrences and relationships among codes. Density values explicitly clarified “2” denotes high correlation, and “1” indicates lower correlation, ensuring methodological transparency.

TABLE 2: Categorization system of codes found during semi-structured interviews.

Concept	Category	Subcategory	(f)	% Frequency	(d)
Individual Work	Personal	Application	24	2.6%	2
		Learning	38	4.2%	2
		Autonomy	5	0.5%	1
		Confidence	18	2.0%	2
		Previous Knowledge	26	2.8%	1
		Discipline	22	2.4%	2
		Experience	13	1.4%	2
		Leadership	19	2.1%	2
		Reality	125	13.7%	2
		Reflection	72	7.9%	1
		Decision Making	9	1.0%	2
		Meeting Expectations	100	11.0%	2
Group Work	Interaction	Creativity	35	3.8%	2
		Evaluation	10	1.1%	2
		Fostering Change	2	0.2%	1
		Teamwork	111	12.2%	2
		Virtuality	37	4.1%	2
		External Engagement	31	3.4%	2
Entrepreneurial Skills	Development	Creativity	9	1.0%	1
		Tools	20	2.2%	2
		Innovation	10	1.1%	1
		Methodology	71	7.8%	2
		Business	11	1.2%	1
		Pandemic	20	2.2%	2
		Process	10	1.1%	1
		Project	45	4.9%	2
		Feedback	20	2.2%	2

Note. Author's development based on *Foundations of qualitative research* by A. Strauss and J. Corbin, 2012, Universidad de Antioquía. CC BY-NC-SA

Interpretative Summary

Personal

Students faced substantial real-world challenges as they applied the CANVAS business model under conditions that were both structured and uncertain. Many entered the course with limited prior knowledge of business modeling, which surfaced in the frequent references to “learning” (4.2%) and previous knowledge (2.8%). They had to exercise high levels of discipline (2.4%) and reflection (7.9%) to manage both personal growth and team obligations. Reality (13.7%) emerged as the most prominent code that showed that students strongly perceived tangible connections between classroom assignments and real-world expectations. The high frequency of “meeting expectations” (11%) and “confidence” (2.0%) demonstrates that success required more than technical skill—it demanded an evolving self-perception and increased self-regulation. As one student reflected, “Facing the real-world expectations of the project made me realize how much I didn’t know—but also how much I could learn.”

Interaction

The collaborative dimension of the courses—especially in virtual settings—emphasized communication, feedback, and shared responsibility; “Teamwork” (12.2%) was one of the top subcategories, revealing how critical group dynamics were to students’ learning. Students navigated group tension, virtual communication, and challenging tasks delegation. As one student expressed “Working online made everything harder—we couldn’t always read each other’s tone or know who was really participating. But it pushed us to be clearer, to listen more, and to find new ways to collaborate.” “Virtuality” (4.1%) and “external engagement” (3.4%) highlighted the constraints posed by the pandemic, which also pushed students to think creatively (3.8%) about how to reach stakeholders or simulate client interactions online. The emotional labor of online teamwork required leadership, evaluation, and trust. This was underscored by the appearance of “evaluation” and “fostering change”—suggesting that collaboration spurred shifts in perception and responsibility.

Development

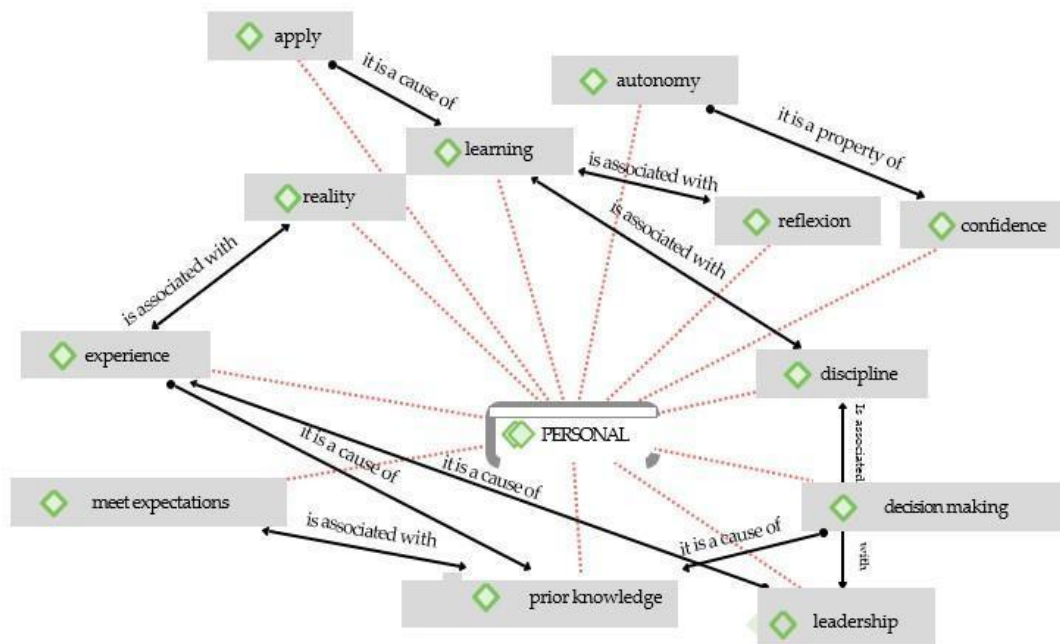
The entrepreneurship project functioned as a critical development tool, compelling students to synthesize their learning. The codes “methodology” (7.8%) “project” (4.9%) and tools (2.2%) show how closely students engage with course structure, and CANVAS business model methodology, which demands discipline, confidence, and autonomy. Interestingly, “feedback” (2.2%) as a contextual code shows that students interpreted their learning through the lens of societal and economic upheaval.

Axial Coding

Axial coding was carried out to organize and interrelate the open codes systematically, facilitating the identification of core categories and their subcategories through a structured analytical process (Strauss & Corbin, 2012). This analytical stage resulted in three distinct semantic networks: personal, interaction and development, each visually mapping interconnected students’ reflections and behaviors. These semantic networks were developed based on the frequency and density analyses of codes extracted using Atlas Ti V23 software allowing deeper theoretical insights into student engagement, learning dynamics, and evolving perceptions of entrepreneurship within the framework of WIL as shown in Figure 1, 2 and 3

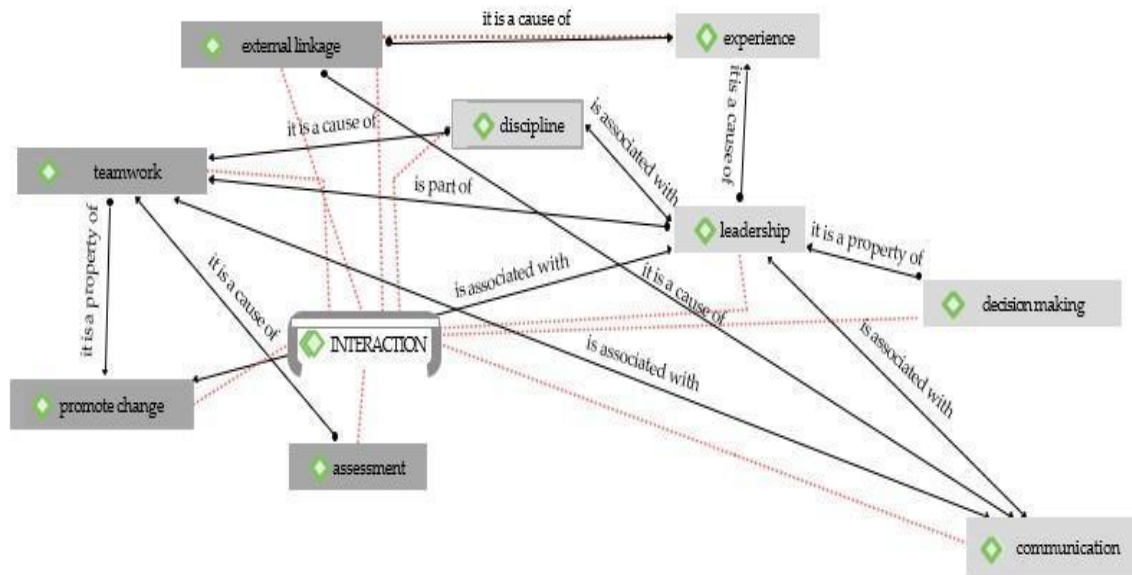
Semantic networks visually represent key themes and their relationships, where thicker lines indicate stronger connections between concepts.

FIGURE 1: Personal semantic network of student reflections.



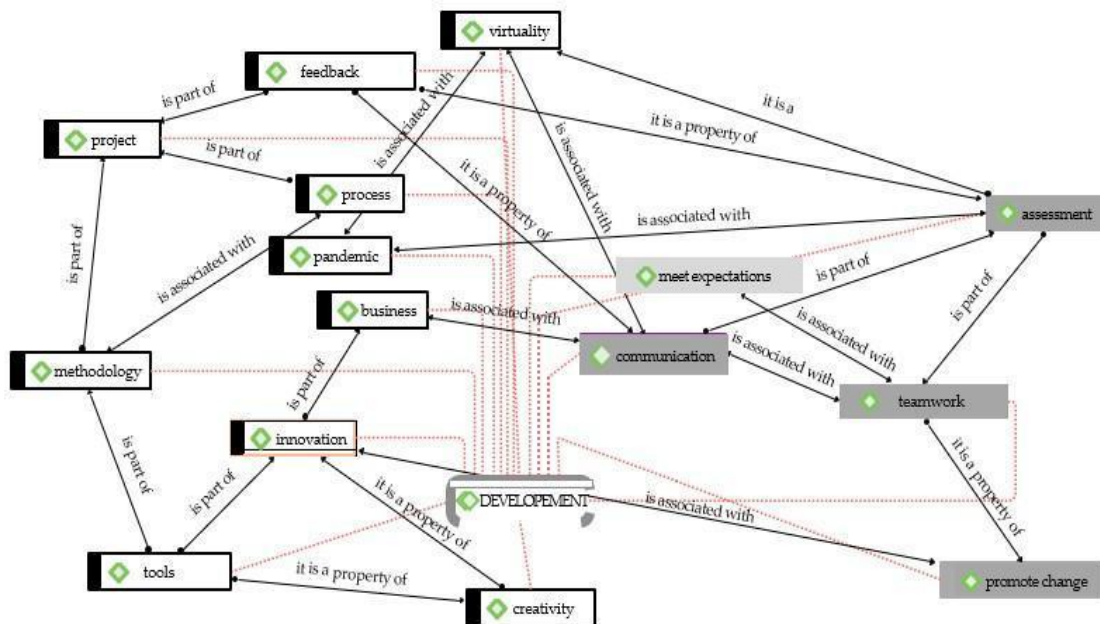
In the personal semantic network, the concept of “reality” acts as a central node that bridges students connected to students’ prior experiences and initial expectations for the course. Students who lacked prior exposure to entrepreneurship described the need to rapidly adapt to its realities, highlighting that adaptation demanded discipline, autonomy, confidence, and reflection. These interconnected elements collectively contributed to substantial personal growth and transformative learning experience. Notably, prior knowledge significantly influenced students’ expectations and shaped their decision-making processes within entrepreneurial contexts, necessitating disciplined approaches and strong leadership for successful outcomes. Students engaged in an outgoing reflective process, continually integrated discipline, confidence, and autonomy into their personal learning trajectories, thereby fostering deeper assimilation of entrepreneurial concepts and skills.

FIGURE 2: Interaction semantic network of team-based learning.



In the interaction semantic network, effective teamwork emerges as a central category underpinned by disciplined approaches to decision-making and leadership. These interpersonal dynamics not only supported successful collaboration but also fostered transformative individual experiences, significantly contributing to positive course evaluation. Students explicitly emphasized communication, adaptability, and trust as essential components within teamwork scenarios. Furthermore, the role of external engagement with mentors and industry representatives surfaced as critical in reinforcing the practical value of entrepreneurial learning. These constraints forced students to adopt innovative virtual tools and strategies, thus further enhancing their digital communication competencies and resilience. These findings are consistent with recent studies on entrepreneurial work-integrated learning (EWIL), which highlight how mentorship and authentic startup settings foster tacit knowledge and shape students' emerging professional identities (Eisenstein & Raz, 2021).

FIGURE 3: Development semantic network of entrepreneurial skills acquisitions.



In the development semantic network, the entrepreneurship project, and the business to be established are seen as fundamental to the learning process in the course. The application of structured methodologies, notably the CANVAS business model (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2011), in combination with creativity and innovation, was highlighted as essential for achieving positive project outcomes. Students stressed the importance of interactive processes involving feedback from both peers and mentors which mirrored authentic entrepreneurial challenges and enhanced the practicality and applicability of learned concepts. Additionally, effective teamwork facilitated by robust communication channels and clear, objective feedback mechanisms was identified as crucial for meeting student expectations and reinforcing learning. However, the forced shift to virtual collaboration due to the COVID-19 pandemic imposed additional complexities negatively influencing students' overall project experiences and perceptions, yet providing valuable insights into managing remote entrepreneurial processes.

DISCUSSION

This paper set out to examine the critical intersection between student voice and entrepreneurship education within the framework of WIL. By prioritizing the perspectives and reflections of students, the research highlights how personal experiences, collaborative dynamics, and skill development contribute to the entrepreneurial learning process.

Students' narratives reveal that entrepreneurship education extends beyond acquiring technical business knowledge; it is a transformative journey rooted in introspection and personal growth. The courses compelled students to step into unfamiliar territories, pushing their boundaries and encouraging self-discipline, reflection, and decision-making. This immersive process emphasized the role of autonomy and confidence as critical enablers of entrepreneurial thinking. For many students,

grappling with the realities of entrepreneurship was a turning point in their educational journey, offering them a unique opportunity to reflect on their values, motivations, and aspirations. This aligns closely with the theoretical foundations of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) emphasizing how the construction of entrepreneurial identity emerges dynamically from student interactions and experiences.

Collaboration emerged as another central theme in students' learning experiences. Effective teamwork was seen as both a challenge and a reward, with students emphasizing the importance of communication, trust, and adaptability. The virtual learning environments necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic added layers of complexity, forcing students to innovate and adapt their collaborative strategies. Digital tools became vital, enabling students to maintain connectivity and engagement despite physical isolation. These constraints not only tested their resilience but also deepened their understanding of teamwork's role in entrepreneurial success. This study reinforces the importance of structured virtual integrations identified by previous research (Berglund & Holmgren, 2013) and provides empirical support for digital adaptation as a critical entrepreneurial competency.

The development of entrepreneurial skills was highlighted as a multidimensional process. Students recognized the value of integrating creativity, innovation, and methodological tools such as the CANVAS business model into their projects. These tools and feedback, both from peers and mentors, was instrumental in refining their ideas and ensuring the viability of their business proposals. This iterative process of trial, feedback, and adjustment, mirrored real-world entrepreneurial challenges, offering students invaluable insights into the complexities of launching and sustaining a business. Additionally, the CANVAS business model's repeated positive mention confirms proper finding by Bandaranaike et al. (2020), validating structured tools as pivotal in fostering actionable entrepreneurship competencies.

Critically, these findings suggest that entrepreneurship education, when structured around applied components such as real case scenarios and external mentorship, can foster not only technical and interpersonal development but also crucial entrepreneurial mindset traits. This resonates with emerging WIL based frameworks that explicitly emphasized resilience, adaptation, and innovation as essential attributes (Bandaranaike et al., 2020). Such traits are integral to navigating contemporary professional landscapes marked by uncertainty and rapid change.

These findings align with Eady et al. (2025), who argue that reflective practice is foundational for developing resilient learners in WIL settings. Similarly, Bandaranaike and Willison's (2015) affective-cognitive skill development framework are mirrored in students' reflections on teamwork, adaptability, and leadership.

Students also reflected on the broader societal and professional implications of their learning. They viewed entrepreneurship education as a platform for becoming proactive agents of change, capable of addressing social and environmental challenges. This aligns with the principles of WIL, where academic learning is enhanced through practical application in real-world contexts. By bridging theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, students felt better equipped to navigate the uncertainties and demands of entrepreneurial endeavors.

This study is limited by its single-institution context and reliance on translated interviews, which may omit cultural nuances. Future research could incorporate multiple sites and explore how gender, disciplinary background, and socio-economic factors shape entrepreneurship learning in WIL settings. Additionally, future research could explore more explicitly how diverse students' identities intersect

with entrepreneurial motivations and experiences, particularly gender, which despite having significant representation among responders, did not spontaneously surface as a key topic of discussion.

CONCLUSION

This research provides clear evidence of the value of centering student voices in entrepreneurship education embedded within WIL frameworks. The analysis of student reflections demonstrates the deep personal transformation and significant skills acquisition facilitated by entrepreneurial education, underscoring the importance of reflective practice, collaborative capabilities, structured methodological frameworks, and critical entrepreneurial mindset traits.

Students described their learning journey as a process of transformation; one that cultivated resilience, autonomy, and leadership. Entrepreneurship courses challenged them to reflect deeply on their experiences, push their boundaries, and develop a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurial practices. These personal insights were complemented by collaborative efforts, where teamwork and communication played pivotal roles in project success. The unique challenges posed by virtual learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the need for adaptability and innovation.

From a developmental perspective, the structured application of tools like the CANVAS business model facilitated creative problem-solving and methodological rigor. Feedback loops provided clarity and refinement, ensuring that students' entrepreneurial ideas were both innovative and feasible. This iterative approach to learning not only enhanced students' confidence but also prepared them to tackle real-world challenges with a strategic mindset.

The findings also highlight the societal value of entrepreneurship education. By fostering skills like creativity, leadership, and adaptability, these courses prepare students to become proactive contributors to their communities. Whether addressing market needs or societal issues, students viewed their entrepreneurial learning as a pathway to creating meaningful impact. These findings align with broader evidence showing that entrepreneurship programs designed within WIL frameworks can significantly enhance graduate attributes such as adaptability, teamwork, and problem-solving critical for employability and civic readiness (Moalosi et al., 2022).

As a recommendation, higher education institutions should continue to prioritize student voices in the design and delivery of entrepreneurship courses. Incorporating more opportunities for external engagement, such as fieldwork and interaction with industry professionals, can further enrich students' learning experiences. Emphasizing personal development, team dynamics, and real-world application will ensure that entrepreneurship education remains relevant and impactful. By aligning these courses with WIL principles, institutions can empower students to navigate and thrive in an ever-changing global landscape, ultimately fostering a generation of innovative, socially conscious entrepreneurs.

Ultimately, this study emphasized that entrepreneurship education, when designed as a WIL-aligned, reflective, and inclusive practice, can cultivate conscious, adaptable, and innovation-driven graduates to shape the future. Moving forward, the intersection of entrepreneurship and WIL presents rich opportunities, not only for individual growth and workforce readiness, but for shaping entrepreneurial ecosystems that are socially responsive and locally grounded. Embedding student voice at the heart of these practices ensures that future graduates are not just prepared to enter the economy, but equipped to transform it.

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About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues related to Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE).

In this Journal, WIL is defined as:

An educational approach involving three parties – the student, educational institution, and an external stakeholder – consisting of authentic work-focused experiences as an intentional component of the curriculum. Students learn through active engagement in purposeful work tasks, which enable the integration of theory with meaningful practice that is relevant to the students' discipline of study and/or professional development (Zegwaard et al., 2023, p. 38").

Examples of practice include off-campus workplace immersion activities such as work placements, internships, practicum, service learning, and cooperative education (co-op), and on-campus activities such as work-related projects/competitions, entrepreneurship, student-led enterprise, student consultancies, etc. WIL is related to, and overlaps with, the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training.

The Journal's aim is to enable specialists working in WIL to disseminate research findings and share knowledge to the benefit of institutions, students, WIL practitioners, curricular designers, and researchers. The Journal encourages quality research and explorative critical discussion that leads to the advancement of quality practices, development of further understanding of WIL, and promote further research.

The Journal is financially supported by the [WILNZ](#), [WACE](#), [WIL Australia](#), and the [University of Waikato](#).

Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL are primarily in two forms: 1) *research publications* describing research into aspects of WIL and, 2) *topical discussion and conceptual* articles that review relevant literature and provide critical explorative discussion around a topical issue. The journal will, on occasions, consider good practice submissions.

Research publications should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry. A detailed description and justification for the methodology employed. A description of the research findings - tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance to current established literature, implications for practitioners and researchers, whilst remaining mindful of the limitations of the data, and a conclusion including recommendations.

Topical discussion and conceptual articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical and scholarly discussion on the importance of the issues, critical insights into how to advance the issue further, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.

Good practice and program description papers. On occasions, IJWIL seeks manuscripts describing an example of good practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or it was situated in an unusual context. There must be a clear contribution of new knowledge to the established literature. Manuscripts describing what is essentially 'typical', 'common' or 'known' practices will be encouraged to rewrite the focus of the manuscript to a significant educational issue or will be encouraged to publish their work via another avenue that seeks such content.

By negotiation with the Editor-in-Chief, the Journal also accepts a small number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.

Reference

Zegwaard, K. E., Pretti, T. J., Rowe, A. D., & Ferns, S. J. (2023). Defining work-integrated learning. In K. E. Zegwaard & T. J. Pretti (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of work-integrated learning* (3rd ed., pp. 29-48). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003156420-4>

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