

KOLB INTERRUPTED

*An investigation into students' experience of an experiential
learning approach to entrepreneurship education*

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We do not receive wisdom, we must discover it for ourselves, after a journey through the wilderness, which no one else can make for us, which no one can spare us, for our wisdom is the point of view from which we must come at last to regard the world.

- Marcel Proust

Abstract

Entrepreneurial activity is widely regarded as a primary driver of socio-economic development. Alongside structural and systemic support, entrepreneurship education is a critical factor in improving entrepreneurial activity. While entrepreneurship education initiatives abound, little is understood about the effectiveness and pedagogical basis of these programmes, especially from the perspective of the student.

This thesis focuses on a case study of a South African programme of entrepreneurship education designed around Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. The research employs a phenomenographic framework to identify the qualitatively different ways in which students experience this experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education. This research shows that students' ways of experiencing learning can be characterised in one of two ways; a superficial way of experiencing learning in which students takes on a less sophisticated and surface view of learning, and an immersed way of experiencing learning in which students' engage in a deep and sophisticated manner. These ways of experiencing learning suggest two ways in which Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is interrupted; firstly, at the point of concrete experience, and secondly, at the point of reflective observation.

This study makes a contribution to knowledge by examining experiential learning from the perspective of the student, and shows how programmes of entrepreneurship education can be better designed, in order to have an impact on entrepreneurial activity and socio-economic development.

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Abbreviations

AGOF	Allan Gray Orbis Foundation
AMP	Austrian Market Process
GEDI	Global Entrepreneurial and Development Index
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TEA	Total Entrepreneurial Activity
USA	United States of America
WEF	World Economic Forum

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1 Introduction

1.1 Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is not a tightly agreed concept and definitions vary from period to period and from theorist to theorist (Ricketts, 2006). Definitions range across major schools of thought and include those focused on risk-seeking or taking (Cantillon, trans. 2010; Knight, 1921), innovation (Schumpeter, 1934), and opportunity-seeking and exploitation (Kirzner, 1973, 1979). A broad definition of entrepreneurship provides a useful departure point for this thesis:

...the manifest ability and willingness of individuals, on their own, in teams within and outside existing organizations, to perceive and create new economic opportunities (new products, new production methods, new organisational schemes and new product-market combinations) and to introduce their ideas in the market in the face of uncertainty and other obstacles, by making decisions on location, form, and the use of resources and institutions. (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999, pp. 46-47)

Entrepreneurship results from the actions of the entrepreneur, who can be defined as ‘a person who undertakes an enterprise, especially a commercial one, often at personal financial risk’ (Ricketts, 2006, p. 34). The entrepreneur is a crucial agent in driving economic growth and development (UNCTAD, 2005); the individual whom Schumpeter regarded as the ‘dynamic element in capitalism’ (Brouwer, 2002, p. 100). Boettke and Coyne (2003) argue against this link, claiming that economic growth and development may as much be the consequence of entrepreneurship, as its cause. An earlier thesis from McClelland (1965) explored the link between economic

growth and national culture, especially a culture of entrepreneurship. Beugelsdijk and Smeets (2008), in revisiting McClelland's thesis, found that while the link exists, it may not be as linear as McClelland originally suggested. This is supported by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) study that proposes a more systemic and integrated approach to understanding entrepreneurship and development in a national context. The GEM Model, revised since its initial inception ten years ago, takes into account these complex causal relationships between entrepreneurship and economic development. The GEM seeks to describe and measure the conditions under which entrepreneurship and innovation can thrive. The model distinguishes between different types of economies. In factor-driven economies, development is driven by basic requirements such as infrastructure; efficiency-driven economies use development to focus on smooth market functioning; and innovation-driven economies regard development as driving towards innovation and job creation (Kelley, Singer, & Herrington, 2012). A measure employed by the GEM is Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA), which is an indication of national entrepreneurial activity of businesses that have been operating for up to three and a half years. The table below illustrates the average TEA scores for the 54 countries that formed part of the 2011 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor study (Kelley et al., 2012).

Table 1. Average Total Entrepreneurial Activity rate for 2011 (Kelley et al., 2012)

Average TEA Score	
Factor driven economies	13.1
Efficiency driven economies	14.1
Innovation driven economies	6.9

The data are presented based on economy type, and shows that, albeit marginally, efficiency-driven economies show the highest incident of TEA. What is of interest is that innovation-driven economies exhibited the lowest TEA score. This is in contrast to a view which suggests that highly developed countries, while showing a decline in entrepreneurial activity during the start of the 20th century, subsequently showed a positive relationship between real income and self-employment (Wennekers, van Stel, Thurik, & Reynolds, 2005). These data illustrate the relative importance of entrepreneurial activity to economic development.

Another measure of national entrepreneurial activity is the recently published Global Entrepreneurial and Development Index (GEDI) (Acs, 2010). GEDI differs from the GEM in that it attempts to measure not only the quantity of the entrepreneurial activity, but also the quality thereof. It includes indicators that seek to quantify contextual features, including attitudes and aspirations. The GEDI, when compared to the GEM, suggests a different picture. Countries that would be regarded by the GEM as innovation-driven reflect a higher score than those regarded as factor- or efficiency-economies. GEDI addresses some of the shortcomings of the GEM by focusing on entrepreneurial activity in existing businesses older than three and a half years, and by taking into account the institutional environment in which entrepreneurship occurs.

While the GEDI study has yet to publish recommendations with regard to increasing entrepreneurial activity, the GEM Global Report 2011 (Kelley et al., 2012) makes a number of recommendations to positively address Total Entrepreneurial Activity. In support of the current study, it is noted that the GEM consistently recommends that 'efficiency-driven economies can turn their attention towards specialized and targeted entrepreneurship education ...' (Kelley et al., 2012, p. 27).

Entrepreneurship education programmes have grown and evolved as the role of the entrepreneur has become more and more central to economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship education, while often used synonymously with enterprise education, differs from small business education. The latter term refers to the skills required to manage an existing small business, whereas the former terms are more often associated with start-up enterprises (Alberti, Sciascia, & Poli, 2005). In the context of the current study, entrepreneurship education is defined as the structured and formal process of developing entrepreneurial competencies (Fiet, 2001a). Programmes of entrepreneurship education differ greatly in terms of design, outcomes, curriculum, and teaching and learning methods. These programmes are often short-term in nature (Garavan & O'Cinneide, 1994), can be embedded into existing programmes of learning (Hartshorn & Hannon, 2005), and use a range of teaching methods including case studies, lectures, simulations and business plans (Honig, 2004). A number of researchers attest to the experiential nature of learning entrepreneurship (Dhliwayo, 2008; Dhliwayo & van Vuuren, 2007; Heinonen & Poikkijoki, 2006; Kauanui, Thomas, Sherman, Waters, & Gilea, 2010; Seet & Seet, 2006; Sherman, Sebor, & Digman, 2008), which raises questions about the possibility of teaching entrepreneurship (Neck & Greene, 2011).

It is frequently argued that entrepreneurship is an important component of South Africa's social and economic transformation and development (North, 2006; Visagie, 1997) aimed at addressing unemployment and social exclusion. In the South African context, entrepreneurship and small business are often seen synonymously (North, 2006), and support for small entrepreneurial enterprises is an aspect of Government policy (Manual, 2009). Notwithstanding the considerable investment by Government, corporate South Africa, and charitable trusts and foundations in various

entrepreneurial development projects, South Africa languishes in the bottom ranks of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor ratings for Total Entrepreneurial Activity. South Africa's TEA rate has never risen above 9.1% of the adult population, and when compared with other similar economies, is consistently a poor performer. There are most certainly structural and systemic issues that are the cause of this low level of entrepreneurial activity (Maas & Herrington, 2006). These include poor access to finance, poor general education, rigid and restrictive regulatory and labour legislation, and a low desire for the pursuit of entrepreneurship as a viable career choice (Maas & Herrington, 2007). Coupled with this, and evidenced by successive reports of the South African GEM Project (for example, Herrington, Kew, & Kew, 2008, 2009; Maas & Herrington, 2007), is poor entrepreneurship education, across all levels of the educational system.

Entrepreneurial development has been attempted at a number of levels in the South African educational system and within broader society. These include school-based programmes, tertiary education initiatives, Government and non-governmental programmes, and continued education projects. Many of these programmes and initiatives are short-term in nature, focused on gathering up unemployed people and giving them some basic skills that will hopefully lead to self-employment, or possible low-level formal employment (Luiz, 2011). They thus lack the ability to inculcate a culture of entrepreneurial thinking that is holistic and opportunity-focused (Timmons & Spinelli, 2007).

Few of these programmes and initiatives offer sustained and substantial interventions with respect to developing entrepreneurial competency beyond the beginning of a small or micro enterprise. In many instances, the provision of entrepreneurial skills is both useful and valuable, albeit of a short-term nature. However, the style of teaching

and learning is reliant upon classroom-based instruction from individuals who often lack the entrepreneurial knowledge to engage fully with the subject (Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich, & Brijlal, 2007; Kabongo & Okpara, 2010; Louw, van Eeden, Bosch, & Venter, 2003).

The intrinsically experiential nature of entrepreneurship (Neck & Greene, 2011) requires a commensurate educational approach in which experience is placed at the core and used as the basis for the construction of knowledge. This requires time and ongoing support, often not available, given the demand on donors to fund these programmes. To move beyond South Africa's low TEA rate, and more specifically to grow and sustain entrepreneurial enterprises over time, will require higher levels of entrepreneurial competency than are usually found in short-term interventions.

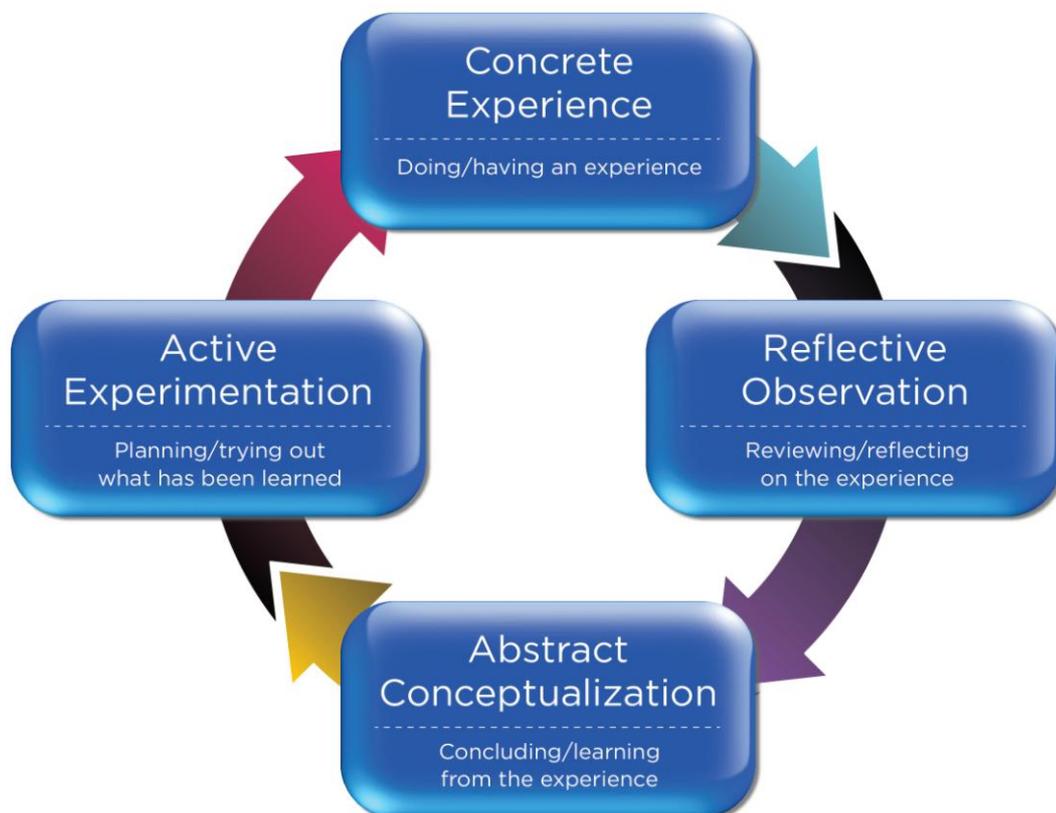
1.2 Experiential Learning and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Experiential learning is a term often associated with non-traditional learning, that is, learning that does not fit the conventional structure of institutionalized education (Weil & McGill, 1989). Experiential learning refers to 'learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with learning in which the learner only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities but never comes in contact with them as part of the learning process' (Evans, 1988, p. 18). Experiential learning definitions often manifest into two broad camps. Firstly, that all learning is experiential, and secondly, the more popular and common understanding of experiential learning is that it is a sequence of stages (Henry, 1989). Within these staged cycles of experiential learning, common stages are experience, reflection, and action, leading to new insights and new actions. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is a common and much used model of experiential learning (for

example, Biers, Jensen, & Serfustini, 2006; Cooper, Bottomley, & Gordon, 2004; Garvin & Ramsier, 2003; Sherman et al., 2008; Wilson & Beard, 2003).

This thesis has conceptual links to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC). Kolb defines experiential learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it' (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). The ELC is a four-stage model that illustrates a cycle of experiential learning. According to this model, concrete experiences are the basis for reflection and observations. These reflections are distilled into a set of abstract conceptualisations that are tested through active experimentation, and serve as inputs to the creation of new experiences (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). The ELC is represented in the Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (adapted from Kolb, 1984)



The ELC also gives rise to four distinct learning styles. These styles, the *technology* behind Kolb and Fry's Learning Style Inventory (Kolb & Fry, 1975), are built around two continua: concrete experience and abstract conceptualisation on the Y-axis, and active experimentation and reflective observation on the X-axis (Kolb & Fry, 1975). While the Learning Style Inventory does not form a part of the current study, it serves to illustrate that learning experientially does require different learning abilities (these are contained in the Learning Style Inventory), dependent on the situation. Kolb's ELC is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

1.3 The Research Study

The current study is informed by a series of interconnected research problems. Within the South African context, entrepreneurship is regarded as a vital driver of socio-economic growth and development (McPherson, 1996). Successive reports of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor have attested to South Africa's poor Total Entrepreneurial Activity, especially when compared to other similar efficiency-based economies. The link between entrepreneurship activity and entrepreneurship education is clear and has been articulated through reports of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Consortium and the World Economic Forum (for example, Bosma, Acs, Autio, Coduras, & Levie, 2008; Bosma, Jones, Autio, & Levie, 2007; Bosma & Levie, 2009; Volkmann, Wilson, Mariotti, Rabuzzi, Vyakarnam, & Sepulveda, 2009; Wong, Cox, & Dhowtalus, 2011). In spite of substantial investment in various entrepreneurship development initiatives and endeavours, South Africa has failed to reach its potential with respect to entrepreneurial activity (Herrington et al., 2009).

Developing entrepreneurial ability requires a nuanced and complex pedagogical framework that takes into account its essentially experiential nature (Krueger, 2007) . Understanding how entrepreneurship is taught and learned is critical to improving the overall quality of entrepreneurship education programmes. This improved educational experience will, in turn, have a positive impact on levels of entrepreneurial activity in South Africa and by extension socio-economic growth and development. Many entrepreneurship education programmes purport to be structured around experiential learning and examination and discussion of these programmes, at least in the published literature (for example, Isaacs et al., 2007; Kroon & Meyer, 2001; Nieman, 2001; North, 2006), is almost entirely of an evaluatory nature, and do not examine the phenomenon of entrepreneurship education from the perspective of the student. This creates a situation in which programmatic success or failure is easily ascribed to either the design of the curriculum, the ability of the student, of the prevailing conditions in which programme graduates find themselves after completion of the programme. What has not been examined is the interactional network of relationships between the student, the programme of learning, and the pedagogical framework.

1.3.1 Research Site

The research site for the current study was the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurship Development Programme (termed hereafter the 'Programme'). The mission of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation is to address unemployment in South and Southern Africa through the mechanism of entrepreneurship. The structure of the Programme provided an opportunity to examine entrepreneurship education within the context of experiential learning. The multi-year entrepreneurship education Programme is based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. The decision to base the

curriculum on Kolb's ELC was linked to the belief that entrepreneurship needed to be experienced to be fully appreciated and understood, and that through experience, sustained over time, students would build a long-lasting entrepreneurial mindset (AGOF, 2006). Experiential learning was also selected as it differs from traditional classroom-based learning through its focus on the co-construction of knowledge through experience, guided by the facilitator. The World Economic Forum's Report on entrepreneurship education supports the importance of building entrepreneurship education programmes through activity and experience (Volkman et al., 2009).

This Programme provided a unique research environment for exploring pertinent issues in entrepreneurship education. Firstly, the Programme is well-funded and supported, making the learning experience a rich one, at least with respect to access to materials, learning opportunities, instructors, and ongoing support. Secondly, the Foundation draws its participants from a large pool of applicants, and selects those who not only show entrepreneurial promise and aspirations, but who have also demonstrated a sound academic ability. Thirdly, the Programme has a long-term objective. There is little pressure on the students to set up an enterprise as soon as they graduate from university. In most cases, students have to complete some form of apprenticeship or internship before gaining their professional accreditation, and the Foundation further encourages students to gain experience in a business sector before considering the starting of an enterprise. Finally, the Foundation, through an affiliate organisation, offers access to a substantial pool of venture capital to fund viable business ventures proposed by students of the Foundation. These factors made the Programme unique in as much as they removed the pressure placed on many start-up entrepreneurs to begin an enterprise as soon as possible, often without the necessary training, support, experience or funding.

A limitation of the current study is that it is focused on a single programme of entrepreneurship education. However, the Programme, while unique in its opportunity for research, is similar in many respects to the broad range of entrepreneurship development programmes in South Africa (Co & Mitchell, 2006). Previous research related to the nature and extent of entrepreneurship programmes in South and Southern Africa (Co & Mitchell, 2006) indicates that these programmes share a focus on developing competency in business and entrepreneurship skills that can be explained through the model suggested by Hytti (2002) which articulates a three-part interactive model, summarized as:

- Learning to understand entrepreneurship;
- Learning to become more entrepreneurial; and
- Learning to become an entrepreneur.

Programmes aimed at developing small, medium and micro enterprises focus on building the skills of the entrepreneur, and creating linkages with the formal and large business sector to facilitate a flow of work and revenue (Luiz, 2011). Programmes at higher education have a greater focus on building an understanding of entrepreneurship, with some focus on developing the skills required to identify a business opportunity and develop a business plan (Co & Mitchell, 2006; Davies, 2001; Isaacs et al., 2007). School-based programmes are in many respects more holistic and integrated, with a focus on building a positive orientation towards entrepreneurship, in order to become entrepreneurial (Kroon, de Klerk, & Dippenaar, 2003).

Notwithstanding the limitation of the current study, given the broad similarity between the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurial Development Programme,

and entrepreneurship development programmes in South and Southern Africa in general (Co & Mitchell, 2006), there is relevance for the current study in the broader domain of entrepreneurship education, and findings flowing from the current study might be applicable to other related contexts.

1.3.2 Research Questions

Drawing on these research concerns, the research questions for the study are as follows.

1. What are the qualitatively different ways in which students experience an experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education?
2. In what ways does understanding students' experiences of learning inform the theoretical understanding of Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle when applied to entrepreneurship education?

The purpose of the study is to show how an understanding of the qualitatively different ways in which students experience learning on an experientially-based entrepreneurship education programme can inform the design of entrepreneurship education programmes so as to contribute to the delivery of socio-economic development.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate the experiences of learning from the perspective of the students on an experientially-based entrepreneurship learning programme.
- To investigate the ways in which these experiences of learning can inform the use of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in entrepreneurship education programmes.

1.3.3 Philosophy and Methodology

The research concerns have developed from the growing need for high levels of entrepreneurial activity to drive socio-economic growth and development. Coupled with this is the importance placed on education as a mechanism for improving Total Entrepreneurial Activity. While many programmes of entrepreneurship education have been examined from an evaluator perspective, few if any have been investigated from the perspective of the student. In light of the research problem and the purpose and objectives of the study, a constructivist/interpretivist philosophy (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Punch, 2009) has been adopted. The research questions seek to *understand* the phenomenon of entrepreneurship education by focusing on the experience of the student. Based on this, the methodological approaches most appropriate for answering the research questions are phenomenography (Bowden, 2000; Marton, 1986) and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2002; Morse, Stern, Corbin, Bowees, Charmaz, & Clarke, 2009). Phenomenography is a study of the qualitatively different ways in which people experience a phenomenon; while grounded theory complements the phenomenographic approach as it provides a framework for analysing the data, beginning with observations, interactions and materials gathered about the subject or setting (Charmaz, 2006).

1.3.4 Research Strategy and Design

The current study used open-ended and unstructured focus groups for the collection of data. Focus groups are an effective method for generating data through collective engagement, discussion and communication on a given theme (Vicsek, 2007). Focus groups, as a form of group interview, has grown as a method in education research as it emphasizes the interaction between the group participants (Cohen et al., 2000).

While focus groups are not common in the phenomenographic tradition, there are cases in which they have been used alongside or in place of face-to-face interviews (Harris, 2008; Loughland, Reid, & Petrocz, 2002).

In the current study the term *participants* is used to refer to those Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Fellows who participated in this research. The term *students* is used to refer to post-school-level learners in the broader context and environment of this study. In South Africa, people being educated at school level are usually referred to as *learners*.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 has provided the background and context for the current study, as well as an explanation of the research problem, research questions, purpose and objectives. The research site, philosophy and methodology, and research strategy and design are also presented.

Chapter 2 provides a review of literature related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. The chapter argues for a definition of entrepreneurship that is opportunity-centric and enacted through an entrepreneurial mindset. The chapter further argues for a constructivist approach to teaching and learning entrepreneurship. Chapter 2 presents literature relevant to an understanding of constructivism, experiential learning theory, and approaches to learning.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological position adopted in the current study. The chapter argues for the use of a constructionist approach in this thesis, and draws on phenomenography and grounded theory as the methodologies for the research.

Chapter 4 presents the context for the collection of data. Details of the research site, the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurship Development Programme, are

provided, including the nature and extent of the Programme material, activities and assessment tasks.

Chapter 5 addresses issues of method, including data collection, data structuring, data analysis, and interpretation. The involvement of the researcher with the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation is discussed, as well as the practicality of collecting data, analysing focus group interview transcripts, and building the elements of the findings.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the data analysis, synthesis and interpretation processes. This is presented around a phenomenographic framework called the Outcome Space, and details the qualitatively different ways in which participants experienced learning on the Programme.

Chapter 7 presents a discussion of the findings, and details the researchers' interpretations, opinions and explanations. The research questions are answered and links to how the answers fit into current literature are provided.

Chapter 8 discusses implications for practice, in particular for experientially based entrepreneurship education. Suggestions for future research flowing from this study are included.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the background to the study. The current study is located within the domain of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. This chapter has presented an argument that links economic development and entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurship education is presented as a mechanism to positively influence entrepreneurial activity. By ensuring that entrepreneurship education initiatives, especially those based on experiential learning theory, are effective, a

positive impact on economic development is possible. In understanding entrepreneurship education programmes, this study proposed an investigation from the perspective of the programme participant. The research problem for the current study has been framed, and from that two research questions were posed. The research site for the current study has likewise been presented.

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2 Educating the Entrepreneur

The field of research that is relevant to entrepreneurship is extensive and multi-faceted. It is not the objective of the current study or specifically this chapter to provide a full analysis of this literature, but rather to offer a focused review through which the findings of this study can be discussed. As entrepreneurship represents the context within which the study is located, literature pertinent to understanding entrepreneurial theory and the development of entrepreneurship education is presented.

This chapter includes a brief discussion of entrepreneurship theory and the growth of entrepreneurship education – both internationally and in South Africa. This is followed by a presentation of the common elements of entrepreneurship education programmes, and contemporary models for entrepreneurship education. This chapter makes an argument for a constructivist approach to be adopted for teaching and learning of entrepreneurship. To aid understanding of constructivism within the context of entrepreneurship education, a brief discussion of constructivism as a learning paradigm, approaches to learning, and experiential learning theory is included in this chapter.

2.1 Foundations of Entrepreneurship

The understanding of entrepreneurship has evolved over time as its role in political, economic and social contexts has shifted and changed. Arguments supporting the developmental role that entrepreneurship can play in society are not new (Liebenstein, 1968) in spite of a near absence of discussion of the entrepreneur from neoclassical economic theory (Baumol, 1968). It is broadly agreed that entrepreneurs

play a central role in driving economic progress, notwithstanding the observation that in spite of its presence in most societies and economies, it is not so much that it is a leading cause of economic development, but rather that economic development may be the consequence of certain types of entrepreneurial activity (Boettke & Coyne, 2003). Economic development can be understood as the ‘increasingly sophisticated ways of producing and competing’ (Wennekers et al., 2005, p. 294), and in many respects represents the transition from a resource-based to a knowledge-based economy. The creation and contribution of knowledge is known as *total factor production*, and may account for as much as 87% of economic growth that is not accounted for through traditional factors such as capital and labour (Acs, 2010). The entrepreneur remains as the dynamic element in capitalism (Brouwer, 2002), and is ‘vital to economic development ... because they create “new combinations” of economic activity’ (Acs, 2010, p. 4).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Consortium has made calls for addressing entrepreneurship at a systemic level (for example, Bosma et al., 2008; Bosma et al., 2007; Bosma & Levie, 2009). An examination of the South African reports of the GEM Consortium (for example, Driver, Wood, Segal, & Herrington, 2001; Foxcroft, Wood, Kew, Herrington, & Segal, 2002; Herrington et al., 2008, 2009; Maas & Herrington, 2006, 2007; Orford, Herrington, & Wood, 2004; Orford, Wood, Fischer, Herrington, & Segal, 2003; von Broembsen, Wood, & Herrington, 2005) reveals the importance of entrepreneurship within South Africa’s political, social, economic and educational environments. Recommendations across nine years of the GEM study have included addressing access to finance, government policy and programmes, education and training, the prevailing legal and financial infrastructure, access to physical infrastructure, market openness, and issues of norms and culture

related to entrepreneurship (for example, Driver et al., 2001; Foxcroft et al., 2002; Herrington et al., 2008, 2009; Maas & Herrington, 2006, 2007; Orford et al., 2004; Orford et al., 2003; von Broembsen et al., 2005).

2.1.1 Economic Models

The word *entrepreneur* is of French etymology, meaning to begin or undertake (Ricketts, 2006). Early mention of the entrepreneur coincided with changes taking place in the workplace. A move from predominantly agrarian activity to the more artificial environment of the shop or factory marked the growing role of the entrepreneur in society (Murphy, Liao, & Welsch, 2006). The classical mode of entrepreneurship recognised issues of supply and demand balance, price arbitrage, and in particular the importance of the management and co-ordination of resources (Murphy, 2009). The focus of classical economics on models of equilibrium did not fully explain the growing importance of innovation and entirely new methods of production. The increased role of exchange value over use value where use value refers to a product's value relating to its utility, and exchange value refers to the quantity of goods or service for which a product can be exchanged (Cantillon, trans. 2010) was likewise not fully explained. Innovation is a discipline of the entrepreneur, and is the 'specific tool ... the means by which [entrepreneurs] exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or a different service' (Drucker, 1985, p. 17).

Schumpeter (1934), widely regarded as a neoclassical thinker, recognised and documented the profit-seeking nature of the entrepreneur. He saw the entrepreneurial individual as involved in the creation of *novel combinations* of resources (Brouwer, 2002). Schumpeter's (1942) notion of *creative destruction* further entrenched the role

of innovation in the activities of the entrepreneur. The neoclassical movement had a greater focus on efficiency than quality and effectiveness, and failed to appreciate fully the movement from exchange value to future value. Issues related to risk and uncertainty were not fully explained (Schumpeter, 1934). Independent of changing thought and theory, Schumpeter's (1934, 1942) thesis remains a mainstay of contemporary entrepreneurialism (Goss, 2005; McDaniel, 2005). He believed that the entrepreneur was a creative innovator and suggested that when innovation was seen to occur, an entrepreneur was present at the moment of creation. Thus the entrepreneur exists within an institutional system that may or may not support such entrepreneurial activity (McDaniel, 2005).

The Austrian Market Process (AMP) movement, while not entirely distinct from the neoclassical movement, made the leap from a perfect closed-loop market system to a more dynamic reality (Murphy et al., 2006). The AMP saw the role of the entrepreneur as being, *inter alia*, to respond to episodic knowledge – what could be understood as opportunistic knowledge, in maximising returns and generating value. Work around risk and uncertainty followed on from the AMP, particularly influenced by the writing of Knight (Brouwer, 2002). Risk is regarded as an insurable event and uncertainty as an event beyond prediction. Uncertainty is compensated for through profit. Appreciation of risk and uncertainty added to the understanding that being an owner of resources was not the same as being an entrepreneur.

In understanding the economic theories of entrepreneurship, the phenomenon of risk needs to be further explored. It is suggested that the theory of entrepreneurship highlights the subjectivity of risk (Casson, 2005). The neoclassical model implies that risk is arranged on a simple insurance model where risks are mitigated through pooling (Casson, 2005). Thus the risk-prone are supported by the risk-averse. In the

neoclassical model, entrepreneurs are the individuals with the greatest tolerance for risk. Subjectivity and access to information are factors in the process of risk evaluation, which is in turn an integral part of the entrepreneurial process. The evaluation and management of risk, a pillar of the neoclassical entrepreneurial movement, is thus central to being a successful entrepreneur (Casson, 2005). This growing understanding of risk was not pervasive in economic thinking. Up until the early 1930s, economists still held the belief that market fluctuations were ‘transitory and an unnecessary muddle’ (Bernstein, 1996, p. 193).

2.1.2 Humanistic Models

From these early economic models of entrepreneurialism, a shift was seen in the mid-twentieth century to a more psychological and sociological understanding of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur. These theories range from the broad application of Lewin’s Force Field Model to explain entrepreneurial behaviour (Cooper, Folta, & Woo, 1995) to current theories which incorporate information processing and knowledge structures and the mechanism of entrepreneurial cognition (Mitchell & Busenitz, 2007; Pech & Cameron, 2006). Humanistic or multidisciplinary approaches to entrepreneurship highlight the fact that entrepreneurialism ‘exists at all levels of an economy’ (Murphy et al., 2006, p. 28), and is not limited to economic activity.

McClelland’s (1965) longitudinal study of the psychological make-up of the typical entrepreneur (understood as *need for achievement*) not only recognised certain people as more entrepreneurial than others, but also identified entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial jobs and professions. McClelland attempted to link entrepreneurial culture to entrepreneurial activity through the identification of traits and

characteristics that separated entrepreneurs from the general population. This was, for a time, a popular model of entrepreneurialism. Despite limited and inconclusive results (Segal, Borgia, & Schoenfeld, 2005), the need for achievement has become a benchmark trait that drives many contemporary theories of entrepreneurship education (Alberti, Sciascia, & Poli, 2004; Co & Mitchell, 2006; Pretorius, Nieman, & van Vuuren, 2005). Notwithstanding the continued interest in entrepreneurial traits (Louw et al., 2003), some commentators have long argued that notions of traits as opposed to behaviour as the drivers of entrepreneurial activity ‘have been unfruitful’ (Gartner, 1989, p. 47).

Current research regarding the importance of emotionality and learning from failure are part of humanistic models of entrepreneurship (Cardon, Stevens, & Potter, 2011). Educators play an important role in moving students through failure, especially the loss of a business venture, so as to learn from these experiences (Shepherd, 2004).

The link between innovation and entrepreneurial activity, especially corporate entrepreneurship (McFadzen, O'Loughlin, & Shaw, 2005), is another element of current research that fits the humanistic frame. Innovation need not be restricted to invention, and social and economic innovation are likewise ‘tool[s] of entrepreneurship by which entrepreneurs exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or service’ (Zhao, 2005, p. 28).

Open innovation, especially at the strategic level, is an extrapolation of the innovation process into the corporate entrepreneurial arena. Traditional business strategy supported the development of ‘defensible positions against the forces of competition and power in the value chain’ (Chesbrough & Appleyard, 2007, p. 57). Open innovation promotes a paradigm in which firms extend beyond internal

resources to include external sources of innovation including competitors, universities and customers (West & Gallagher, 2006).

Social innovation, an output of social entrepreneurship, is an attempt to offer the process of innovation to local and global social needs and issues. The important distinction between social innovation and for profit innovation is in motivation. Social innovation is motivated by the need to meet social needs, for profit innovation is motivated by profit maximization (Mulgan, Tucker, Ali, & Sanders, 2007).

Having developed an overview of the conceptual and theoretical background to entrepreneurialism, the following section details a number of key definitions of entrepreneurship.

2.1.3 Contemporary Definitions of Entrepreneurship

As discussed in the previous section, the understanding of entrepreneurship has changed over time, each reflective of the context within which it was developed and representative of a growing appreciation of the role of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur. The common understanding of the entrepreneur is of an individual who ‘undertakes an enterprise, especially a commercial one, often at personal financial risk’ (Ricketts, 2006, p. 34). Shane and Venkataraman (2000) make the point that a focus on the enterprise may be too simplistic an explanation, given that successful entrepreneurship requires the presence of both an opportunity and an enterprising individual.

A useful distinction has been made between the forms and uses of the word *entrepreneurship*. The individual is regarded as the *entrepreneur*, the process this individual follows is called *entrepreneurship*, and the required attitudes, skills and behaviours of the entrepreneur are synonymous with being *entrepreneurial*. The role

that society plays in fostering and supporting entrepreneurship is defined as the *entrepreneurial ecosystem* (Volkman et al., 2009).

An examination of definitions of entrepreneurship presents a myriad thoughts, ideas and concepts, and has yet to yield a single unifying theory (Rae, 2000). Contemporary definitions and fields of focus for defining entrepreneurship include entrepreneurship as a process of resource allocation and management of resources (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990); entrepreneurship as an act of innovation (O'Boyle, 1994); entrepreneurship as an individual and corporate activity (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999); entrepreneurship as the creation of future goods or services (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000); entrepreneurship as an expression of culture (Morrison, 2000); entrepreneurship as the process of cognition and decision-making (Pech & Cameron, 2006); and entrepreneurship as an act of social activism (Mair & Marti, 2006).

The interpretations referred to above, while ranging in focus and emphasis, share two common threads. The first is that entrepreneurship is centred on the recognition of opportunity, and the second is that entrepreneurship is the work of an enterprising individual with a specific mindset rather than just the application of a discrete set of business skills. With respect to opportunity recognition, Stevenson and Jarillo (1990, p. 23) state that 'entrepreneurship is ... [the] pursuit [of] opportunity without regard to the resources currently controlled'. Wennekers and Thurik (1999, p. 33) support this view, suggesting that 'to start as an entrepreneur both willingness and opportunity are essential'. Mair and Marti (2006, p. 38), addressing the issues of social entrepreneurship, state that 'researchers have focused on the social entrepreneur ... [and] the social opportunity in order to emphasise its entrepreneurial

nature'. Based on the prior discussion, it is proposed that opportunity lies at the core of the entrepreneurial endeavour.

Secondly, the skills to be an enterprising individual are steadily being understood to be a set of aptitudes (José Acedo & Florin, 2006; Mitchell, Smith, Morse, Seawright, Peredo, & McKenzie, 2002). This is also described as a set of cognitive abilities, linked to an entrepreneurial mindset, rather than a discrete package of business skills (Haynie, Shepherd, Masokowski, & Earley, 2010). The ability to evaluate opportunities and make the best decisions as to their worth and value lies at the heart of entrepreneurial activity (Pech & Cameron, 2006). The fusing of the centrality of opportunity with the growth in emphasis on cognition suggests that cognition is central to entrepreneurship, and can be understood as 'the knowledge structures that people use to make assessments, judgments, or decisions involving opportunity, evaluation, venture creation, and growth' (Mitchell, Smith, et al., 2002, p. 97).

Building upon the argument that entrepreneurship is a function of both opportunity recognition and cognitive ability, and supporting Shane and Venkataraman's (2000) view that successful entrepreneurship has some focus on the individual, the two definitions presented below have been identified as particularly relevant to the current study. They are also representative of an understanding of entrepreneurship that is opportunity focused and enacted by an enterprising individual who possesses the appropriate mindset.

Thompson (2004, p. 244) regards the entrepreneur as 'a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognised value around perceived opportunities'. In examining this definition more closely, it is worth noting the introduction of *habitually* – reference to what may be called serial entrepreneurship,

and secondly, the term *recognised value* which can include economic, social or aesthetic value (Thompson, 2004).

Timmons and Spinelli (2007, p. 79) suggest that entrepreneurship is:

A way of thinking, reasoning and acting that is opportunity-based, holistic in approach and leadership-balanced. Entrepreneurship results in the creation, enhancement, realization and renewal of value not just for the owners but also for all participants and stakeholders.

For Timmons and Spinelli (2007), the inclusion of the term *holistic* offers important clues to the systemic nature of entrepreneurship, further supported by reference to value creation for *all participants and stakeholders*. Likewise, the introduction of leadership into their definition gives support to current research in which leadership and entrepreneurship are being seen in a similar light (Cogliser & Brigham, 2004).

These two definitions provide a link to entrepreneurial theory, and make the argument for a focus on opportunity recognition and cognitive skill. Opportunity is exploited through the agency of the entrepreneur or enterprising individual, who employs both practical skills and the appropriate mindset in the entrepreneurial endeavour. These two definitions serve as a guide for the current study with respect to how entrepreneurship is understood and perceived.

This section examines what constitutes entrepreneurship, how it manifests in society, and how it is defined. In the following section entrepreneurship education, including a discussion of the difference between entrepreneurship, small business, and general business education is discussed.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education

Research into the role of business, in particular small business, as a driver of job creation in the United States of America (USA) identified that support of high-growth small entrepreneurial firms was central to government's economic development initiatives (Aronsson, 2004). In contrast, it has been argued (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999) that while many small firms are a mechanism through which entrepreneurship manifests, this is as likely to occur through large firms.

Second only to the growth in interest and activity around entrepreneurship is the explosion of activity related to entrepreneurship education, which has the ability to be a change agent in society. The *World Economic Forum Report of Entrepreneurship Education* (Volkman et al., 2009) suggests that 'not everyone needs to become an entrepreneur to benefit from entrepreneurship education, but all members of society need to be more entrepreneurial' (Volkman et al., 2009, p. 12).

2.2.1 Development of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a feature of many university programmes, across a wide range of faculties and disciplines (Solomon, Duffy, & Tarabishy, 2002). A number of features of the international and South African entrepreneurial educational contexts are discussed in this section.

Features of the International Context

Entrepreneurship education has grown considerably since its reputed first introduction into formal business education at Harvard Business School in 1945 (Vesper & Gartner, 1997). In fact, it would appear that the first university-based programme in entrepreneurship education began as early as 1938 at Kobe University

in Japan (Alberti et al., 2004). However, what emerged in the 1940s was arguably more akin to small business education (Solomon et al., 2002). From the 1960s, entrepreneurship education was focused on the origination and development of new and growth-orientated ventures. By the 1970s, entrepreneurship education had grown to over a dozen USA-based universities, and by 2005 included over 2,200 courses at universities around the USA (Kuratko, 2005). While there is not always a connection between styles of entrepreneurship education and the underlying economic models that have given rise to entrepreneurship (Henry, Hill, & Leitch, 2005b; Klein & Bullock, 2006), it has been argued that there is a progression in entrepreneurship education that begins with a focus on the entrepreneur, and moves to a focus on the firm and finally a focus on thinking (Neck & Greene, 2011). This progression of the framing of entrepreneurship education has not always been accompanied by a commensurate progression in terms of levels of sophistication of teaching, nor by the inclusion of a broad market interest in entrepreneurship education, especially at a higher education level (Kuratko, 2005).

There is continued interest in entrepreneurship education as a global phenomenon. A number of studies have examined the topic and supported the debate on the role of entrepreneurship education in the mainstream of primary, secondary and tertiary education (de Rezende & Christensen, 2009; Martínez, Levie, Kelley, Sæmundsson, & Schøtt, 2010; Volkmann et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2011). Following from discussion in Chapter 1, the GEM Report, using research undertaken in 2008, examines entrepreneurship education and training in thirtyeight countries (Bosma et al., 2008). The report, which formed the primary data of the GEM Project, sought to understand the nature and extent of entrepreneurship education and training among participating nations through the GEM economic development model of factor-driven

economies (lowest level), efficiency-driven economies (middle level), and innovation-driven economies (highest level).

The research is comprehensive and highly detailed and includes some areas of relevance to the current study. Only six nations indicated satisfaction with the state of their non-formal (outside the formal education system) entrepreneurship education and training. Most noteworthy was Finland, which has integrated entrepreneurship into its formal education system and who are committed 'to enhancing the entrepreneurial spirit among Finns and to making entrepreneurship a more attractive career choice' (Martínez et al., 2010, p. 18). This is further reflected in the *Adult Populations Survey* data (Martínez et al., 2010), which show Finland as having the highest level of entrepreneurship training among the countries that participated in the survey. Not all nations, however, integrate entrepreneurship education into their formal education system. The GEM Report shows that just over 60% of individuals who participated in entrepreneurship education and training have done so *outside* the formal educational environment. The report indicated that while business or entrepreneurship training may be received in an informal manner, the educational experience regarding *start-up* enterprises – understood as the initial input into the idea of beginning an enterprise – is usually received at school. There is a high level of volunteerism regarding informal entrepreneurship education – in other words, individuals seeking out the training rather than participating because it is a requirement. There are some demographic differences in accessing training and education, where men tend to be more likely to participate than women, the young are more likely to receive training, and wealth and education are positively correlated with the likelihood of having received training (Martínez et al., 2010). It is worth noting that there is little mention in the GEM study of the role and importance of

teaching or pedagogical theory on the impact or effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. The absence of this discussion is unusual given a much earlier call (Shepherd & Douglas, 1996) for the role of the entrepreneurship educator in the entrepreneurial development process. The question of how this is to be achieved is still an issue of debate, as entrepreneurship educators are challenged ‘to find innovative teaching methods that coincide with the requirements of potential entrepreneurs’ (Henry et al., 2005b, p. 164).

Features of the South African Context

In terms of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Herrington, Kew, & Kew, 2010), South Africa is regarded as a mid-level efficiency-driven economy. Levels of entrepreneurial activity in South Africa, as measured by GEM as Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA), are low when compared to other efficiency-driven economies. The TEA rate ‘indicates the prevalence of business startups and new firms in the adult population ... it captures the level of dynamic entrepreneurial activity in a country’ (Herrington et al., 2010, p. 11). The TEA rate for South Africa for the ten-year period from 2002 to 2011 reached a high of 9.1% (2011) and a low of 4.3% (2004) (Herrington et al., 2008, 2010; Kelley et al., 2012). A consistent recommendation of the South African GEM Reports has been to address entrepreneurship through the formal education system.

It has been documented (Davies, 2001; Driver et al., 2001; Foxcroft et al., 2002; Isaacs et al., 2007; North, 2006) that there are low levels of economic literacy among schoolchildren in South Africa, and that as the curriculum needed to address unemployment and development challenges in South Africa, pressure was placed on schools to educate children to become employers rather than employees (Louw et al.,

2003). Entrepreneurship education was not formally included in the South African school system until the introduction of Curriculum 2005 (North, 2006), an outcomes-based curriculum that moved significantly away from the type it replaced. Entrepreneurship education's subsequent inclusion in the school curriculum happened in an embedded manner through Economics and Management Sciences, rather than through the explicit creation of a subject called *Entrepreneurship*. The gap, prior to this introduction, was filled by a number of private initiatives, many linked to corporate social responsibility projects, non-profit organisations, and university outreach programs (Luiz, 2011).

The state of entrepreneurship education within higher education, while less formalised and controlled than that at the pre-tertiary level, has mirrored international growth and interest in the subject, especially through the expectation that 'better entrepreneurship education would result in more and better entrepreneurs' (Kabongo & Okpara, 2010, p. 296). Entrepreneurship education initiatives at South African higher education institutions are substantial in number and scope (Co & Mitchell, 2006). These include courses at undergraduate and post-graduate level, across universities and universities of technology. Many institutions offer outreach programmes with primary schools, secondary schools, and nearby communities (Co & Mitchell, 2006).

With respect to initiatives focused on continued education, these differ vastly in terms of their scale, scope, objectives and target group. Many initiatives are centred on entrepreneurship as a mechanism for social and economic inclusion (Wong et al., 2011), which in turn links to entrepreneurship education initiatives which form a part of local economic development projects (Nel & McQuaid, 2002). These are often led

through partnerships between government, community-based organisations, and local business.

The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurial Development Programme is an example of a programme driven by private enterprise, and delivered partly through the agency of higher education institutions.

2.2.2 Programmes of Entrepreneurship Education

The question of whether entrepreneurship can be taught – or more accurately, whether entrepreneurs are born or made – seems to have lost some of its relevance (Kuratko, 2005). Given the profound growth in programmes of entrepreneurship education across the educational system (Klein & Bullock, 2006), it has been suggested that the correct question to ask is not whether entrepreneurship can be taught, but rather ‘what should be taught and how should it be taught’ (Kuratko, 2005, p. 581).

Three forces or waves have influenced the current status of entrepreneurial education:

- The wave of global industrialisation and the need for professional management, which has provided input related to strategic thinking and economics into entrepreneurship education.
- The increase in free-market economics, and the role of private ownership, which has necessitated the need for training and education regarding small business management and administration.
- The increased emphasis on skills training, especially for those with less formal education, has served to include social skills and teamwork skills into the entrepreneurship curriculum (Volkman et al., 2009).

There is broad agreement among researchers, academics and educators that entrepreneurship can be taught and learned (Fiet, 2001a; Neck & Greene, 2011; Solomon et al., 2002). The debate about entrepreneurship education is linked to an understanding of the difference between entrepreneurship education, small business education, and general business education (Henry, Hill, & Leitch, 2005a). These terms are often used synonymously, especially in the South African context (Kroon & Meyer, 2001; Nieman, 2001), and there is value in differentiating between entrepreneurship education and that of small business and general business education.

Small business education broadly follows the stages of development of an enterprise, from initial awareness and conception, to start-up and operation, and on to growth and management (Jamieson, 1984). While a greater similarity can be seen with regard to small business education and entrepreneurship education as contrasted with general business education and entrepreneurship education, the similarity is restricted to the fact that the former has an initial focus on the small or start-up enterprises. The key objective of small business education is to manage post-start-up firms to a level of predictable sales and operational efficiency. Entrepreneurship education differs in as much as it focuses on enterprises with fast growth, high levels of profitability, and visible and realistic exit strategies (Isaacs et al., 2007; Solomon et al., 2002).

General business education differs from entrepreneurship education in a number of respects. The skills required to run a business are useful irrespective of the intended application, but the specific skills needed to initiate an enterprise versus those required to operate and manage an existing business are quite different (Solomon et al., 2002).

General business education is more specialised in nature, with a greater focus on managing through the business cycle (Solomon et al., 2002). Entrepreneurship

education is more general in nature, with a greater emphasis on the start-up stage of the venture as well as the theory of entrepreneurship and enterprise and the conditions that give rise to the development of entrepreneurial businesses (Garavan & O'Connell, 1994; Henry et al., 2005a). The fundamental objective of entrepreneurship education is to 'generate more quickly a greater variety of different ideas for how to exploit a business opportunity, and the ability to project a more extensive sequence of actions for entering a business' (Solomon et al., 2002, p. 67).

Jamieson's (1984) work on entrepreneurship education gave rise to the now much-used three-category model for the organisation of entrepreneurship education. He differentiated between 'education about enterprise, education for enterprise and education in enterprise' (p. 19). *Education about enterprise* is focused on educating students regarding the various elements of starting and operating a business. This learning is usually from the perspective of small business theory. This learning mode seeks to enhance skills, values, attitudes and specific competencies in order to facilitate the successful start-up and day-to-day management of a business enterprise. *Education for enterprise* has as its focus the preparation of a business plan as the proxy for the culmination of entrepreneurial learning and understanding. The skills gained are highly practical and are aimed at creating a framework for the aspirant entrepreneur to start a business at the end of the programme of learning. Most business programmes and start-your-own business courses would appear to fall into this category of learning. *Education in enterprise* is targeted at established business owners and entrepreneurs, and offers management skills training to ensure growth and sustainability. These types of learning activities are often offered as short executive-style courses, and present an opportunity to learn immediate skills that address immediate problems or issues in the enterprise.

It has been suggested that an emphasis on teaching theoretical elements of entrepreneurship is a necessary precursor to entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, the ability to teach the theory of entrepreneurship in such a way that it retains its essentially experiential nature, is often the work of the entrepreneurship educator (Fiet, 2001a, 2001b).

It has been argued that entrepreneurship education differs from small business education and general business education. This view is supported by Kirby (2004), who recognizes that while the debate on entrepreneurial traits is no longer popular, it has provided the basis to understand the intrinsic nature of the entrepreneur and places a focus upon the attributes of the individual entrepreneur. Kirby (2004) further suggest a list of characteristics, which can be understood as a set of cognitive skills, attributes, and mindsets that are associated with an individual entrepreneur. Drawing on these arguments, this section presents selected relevant theory related to opportunity recognition and the development of the necessary cognitive skills and mindset for the enterprising individual.

Opportunity Recognition

The cross-disciplinary definitions of entrepreneurship presented earlier have highlighted the centrality of opportunity recognition to the entrepreneurial endeavour. It may well be that a fundamental question related to entrepreneurship is not ‘[what] is an entrepreneur but [rather] what is an entrepreneurial opportunity?’ (Singh, 2001, p. 11).

Reasons that some people will identify entrepreneurial opportunities include ownership of prior knowledge or information needed to identify the opportunity, and the intellectual (cognitive) abilities to understand the value of the opportunity. The

literature related to opportunity recognition would appear to be dichotomous (see Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Vaghely & Julien, 2010). One school of thought sees entrepreneurial opportunity as objective, endogenous (of an internal origin), and focused on the entrepreneur and the ways in which he or she processes information (Krueger, 2000). For others it is seen as subjective, exogenous (of an external origin), and centred on knowledge sharing, social networks and social cognition (José Acedo & Florin, 2006).

Opportunity recognition and opportunity construction may arguably be seen as two points on a continuum. Opportunity recognition is associated with the discovery point in the business lifecycle, and opportunity construction is connected to the point of activation (Vaghely & Julien, 2010). A useful framework to understand opportunity recognition is offered by Ardichvili, Cardozo and Ray (2003), who see the ability to recognise opportunity as linked to prior knowledge by creating a *knowledge corridor*. This allows for the idiosyncratic recognition of opportunities. This prior knowledge is related to three dimensions: 'prior market knowledge, prior knowledge of how to serve markets, and prior knowledge of customer problems' (Ardichvili et al., 2003, p. 114).

Recognition of entrepreneurial opportunity is a form of pattern recognition; the process of pattern recognition is about *connecting the dots* (Baron & Ensley, 2006). Entrepreneurial opportunity recognition as pattern identification is a useful construct, as it brings together activities that are common among entrepreneurs who have exhibited success at recognising opportunities. These activities are active engagement in the search for opportunities, alertness to opportunities, and prior knowledge of a market or industry (Baron, 2006). A mode of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition that draws on cognitive science is pattern recognition. Pattern recognition is the

process whereby individuals are able to discern meaningful patterns through a complex array of information, trends and events (Baron, 2006; Haynie et al., 2010; Mitchell, Busenitz, Lant, McDougall, Morse, & Smith, 2002). Pattern recognition, as a framework for entrepreneurial opportunity identification, would answer why some individuals see connections between seemingly disconnected events and generate viable business opportunities from those connections (Baron & Ensley, 2006).

Models of pattern recognition are categorised as either prototype models or exemplar models (Baron, 2006; Baron & Ensley, 2006). Prototype models are among the most widely used as a framework for understanding pattern recognition. Prototypes are internal templates that assist in attaching meaning to external inputs (Baron, 2006; Baron & Ensley, 2006). Prototypes are the result of experience and experiences. Each individual experience is used to assist in constructing internal prototypes.

Exemplar models do not see value in prototypes or frameworks, but rather find their value in the importance placed upon specific knowledge (Baron, 2006). Exemplar models could be seen as a more refined version of prototype models. Rather than comparing external inputs to a *typical* prototype, these inputs are compared to highly specific examples that directly relate to the phenomenon being considered. Exemplar models would seem to be a comfortable fit with the response from successful entrepreneurs who 'just know a good opportunity when they see one' (Baron, 2006, p. 110). Exemplar models also support the ways in which experienced entrepreneurs look for new opportunities in the sectors or industries in which they already have experience – they compare these new opportunities to their existing, highly specific, exemplar models.

Opportunity recognition, and in particular entrepreneurial pattern recognition, is linked to entrepreneurial cognition. The way entrepreneurs think and the manner in

which decisions are made is influenced by past experiences, both entrepreneurial and educational. The following section briefly discusses entrepreneurial cognition.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

In understanding the entrepreneurial mindset and the role of cognition (the mental act or process by which knowledge is acquired) in the entrepreneurial process, it may be valuable to be aware of a few of the key aspects of cognitive theory. Firstly, our ability to process new knowledge or information is limited and can be easily overloaded; secondly, we seek to minimise cognitive effort in the same way that we seek to minimise physical effort; and thirdly, because of the two points already made, we are not always rational in our cognitive processes and are often prone to bias and error (Baron, 1998). It has been found that these factors are particularly applicable to entrepreneurs, especially in situations where information is overloaded, where situations are characterised by high risk and uncertainty, where there is an intensity of emotions, and where time pressure is severe (Baron & Ensley, 2006).

Baron (1998) suggests that counterfactual thinking, imagining what would have happened in specific situations, points towards the hypothesis that entrepreneurs may have greater regret over missed opportunities than others. They therefore tend to seek and exploit opportunities. In a study designed to test this hypothesis, Baron and Ensley (2006) used two questions; the first asked respondents to examine their entire past life and list three things that they regretted. The second question asked the same respondents to list three things they regretted from the previous week. Answers to the first question were mostly things the respondents had not done – missed opportunities, whereas answers to the second question were things that the respondent had done but now regretted. The researchers (Baron & Ensley, 2006)

concluded that among entrepreneurs the desire not to fail or miss an opportunity resulted in greater opportunity orientation.

An entrepreneurial mindset is linked to the idea that a common variable among entrepreneurs is *an expert mindset* (Krueger, 2007). Entrepreneurial thinking could be associated with the development of an entrepreneurial mindset. A mindset, in particular an entrepreneurial mindset, describes ‘a way of thinking and action about business and its opportunities that captures the benefits of uncertainty’ (Dhliwayo & van Vuuren, 2007, p. 124). Uncertainty coupled with complexity indicates that an entrepreneurial mindset is a valuable commodity in most daily dealings, interactions and activities (Sarasvathy, 2001; Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri, & Venkataraman, 2005).

In further understanding the nature and development of an entrepreneurial mindset, the role of learning, culture, and identity as mechanisms in the entrepreneurial cognition process is discussed below.

Research within the discipline of cognitive psychology indicates that not everyone moves from novice to expert (Krueger, 2007). What is evident is that the transition to expert in any field is connected to changes to cognition, in particular cognitive structures, beliefs and assumptions (Krueger, 2000). While there is some *hard wiring*, becoming an expert entrepreneur is a learned process, the key differential being the ways in which knowledge is structured and organised (Krueger, 2007). In moving from novice to expert, a change in knowledge is coupled with critical developmental experiences. This suggests that a constructivist approach to learning entrepreneurship will be more effective than a behaviourist approach (Krueger, 2000, 2007).

A model of entrepreneurial activity that fits with a cognitive approach is effectuation. Effectuation is contrasted with causation. Causation can be understood as a process that begins with a particular effect and places focus on selecting between means to achieve that effect. Effectuation begins with a set of means and placed emphasis on selecting possible effects that are possible within the given set of means (Sarasvathy, 2001). Studies on effectuation in entrepreneurship fit a cognitive frame, as they examine the different approaches followed by novices and experts. It has been found that expert entrepreneurs will follow an effectuation path, starting with the means and moving towards the effect, whereas a novice will start with the desired effect and then follow a causal path (Dew, Read, Sarasvathy, & Wiltbank, 2009). The effectual frame has a role to play in curriculum design, and in experience-based learning, through learning from failure (Read, Sarasvathy, Dew, Wiltbank, & Ohlsson, 2011).

A constructivist approach suggests a mode of learning in which knowledge is not transmitted, but is constructed and negotiated as a means of making sense of and organising reality (Larochelle & Bednarz, 1998).

An understanding of identity may be crucial to understanding the role that perception plays in entrepreneurial activity (Shaver & Scott, 1991). McKenzie (2003) suggests that becoming an entrepreneur is, in a very real sense, about developing one's self-identity. This role identity is a social construct, as individuals shape their image of being entrepreneurial based on the information that they have at hand, tempered by their experiences and immediate environment. Even negative experiences related to entrepreneurship can have a positive outcome in terms of entrepreneurial activity (Kets de Vries, 1996).

Identity issues are highly prevalent in a family business environment (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). The scenario of a family business may be approximated as an

environment where individuals are surrounded by issues related to business and enterprise. An individual's identity is based, in part, on the social group or category to which they ascribe. These categories are self-forming and invoke a set of attributes and a meaning in their membership (McKenzie, 2003). In aligning to a social group, a comparison is made by the individual based on their current identity and that of the group. Thus a positive group identity creates a positive individual identity. A risk of identity conflict can emerge if an individual's sense of identity, created from a range of past experiences, does not resonate with the aspiring group's identity (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009).

Increasing risk and a decreasing ability to forecast future events effectively marks the contemporary global business environment. With the fluidity of industry boundaries, the need to be and to manage in an entrepreneurial way is more and more a basic requirement of the commercial world (Morris & Kuratko, 2002). Developing an entrepreneurial mindset is crucial, as engaging in the entrepreneurial process increases the risk of exposure to failure and liability (Fayolle, Basso, & Bouchard, 2010).

An entrepreneurial mindset is a combination of ways of thinking and ways of behaving (Dhliwayo & van Vuuren, 2007). There is a focus on value creation, opportunity seeking and recognition, and capturing the benefits of uncertainty. An entrepreneurial mindset may be best understood as 'the ability to rapidly sense, act, and mobilize, even under uncertain conditions' (Haynie et al., 2010, p. 218).

Having developed two of the key elements of entrepreneurship curricula, namely, opportunity recognition and developing an entrepreneurial mindset, in the section that follows contemporary frameworks of entrepreneurship education are discussed.

2.2.3 Contemporary Frameworks of Entrepreneurship Education

Following on from the previous discussion of entrepreneurship education curricula, this section briefly examines two models of entrepreneurship education at a systemic (national or international) level. These models are drawn from the two definitive studies in this regard, namely, the GEM *Special Report on Entrepreneurship Education* (Martínez et al., 2010) and the WEF Report (Volkman et al., 2009) entitled *Educating the Next Wave of Entrepreneurs*. This is followed by a presentation of the model for entrepreneurship education as presented by Neck and Greene (2011), who offer a useful construct for understanding the progression in the structure of teaching and learning entrepreneurship.

Research by the GEM Consortium (Martínez et al., 2010) into entrepreneurship education and training made a number of observations and conclusions with respect to growing the level of national entrepreneurship across participating member nations. While the work of the GEM Consortium is valuable in as much as it provides an almost global benchmark of entrepreneurial activity, the report lacks input at the curriculum level, and particularly at the pedagogical level.

The studies undertaken by the World Economic Forum (Volkman et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2011), offer a more useful discussion of entrepreneurship education within a global context. While these studies are predominantly the result of an evaluation project, there is a useful conceptualisation of entrepreneurship education as an ecosystem. Government, academic institutions, and business are clearly presented as the three key role players in nurturing and supporting individual entrepreneurial activity and endeavours.

The WEF Reports makes some recommendations at the level of pedagogy, in particular the importance of constructing entrepreneurship education interventions and programmes in such a way that they address the different ways in which people learn through activity, experience, simulation and practice (Volkman et al., 2009). The report's emphasis on the entrepreneurial ecosystem supports earlier discussions on entrepreneurial cognition and the entrepreneurial mindset. The belief that *I am an entrepreneur* is supported by training and education, especially at an early age, when educational experiences can have a profound impact at a deep cognitive level, affecting scripts of learning and identity (Krueger, 2007).

Neck and Greene (2011) provide a useful model for understanding entrepreneurship education. They identify three *worlds* – the world of the entrepreneur, the world of process, and the world of cognition, as ways of understanding a rough progression in entrepreneurial pedagogy. The *world of the entrepreneur*, linked to the debate and acceptance of the importance of traits in identifying and developing entrepreneurs, was constructed around the entrepreneur as an individual with almost 'superhero characteristics' (Neck & Greene, 2011, p. 57). This *world* has been criticized (Neck & Greene, 2011), in as much as it was predominantly based on studies that comprised sample groups of white males, thereby limiting the possibility of broader generalization. The view of entrepreneurship within this world was narrowly focused on economic value creation, a point that has been argued earlier in this chapter as being limited in the contemporary context.

The *world of process* draws from a multidisciplinary view of entrepreneurship and builds on organisational theory. This world examines the entrepreneurial enterprise from creation to exit, and includes a range of other issues pertinent to the enterprise over its life cycle, including access to capital, management of resources, performance

planning and monitoring, and managing growth. The *world of process* is representative of most entrepreneurship education curricula internationally. Pedagogical tools are invariably case studies and the creation of a business plan. Neck and Greene (2011, p. 59) refer to this world as one of *planning and prediction*, characterised by a linear approach to understanding entrepreneurship and to teaching and learning entrepreneurship.

The lack of linearity and an inability to predict entrepreneurial activity effectively has given rise to the *world of cognition*. This broadly demonstrates understanding of how people think entrepreneurially. This world is concerned with the mental models that are created through an educational experience. There is tacit acknowledgement that the *world of cognition* is not devoid of skills, especially business or entrepreneurial skills, but is more concerned with developing thinking skills, understanding the motivation for or desire to become an entrepreneur, learning how to work in teams, and understanding the identification and exploitation of opportunity (Mitchell, Busenitz, et al., 2002). While these *worlds* are explained on a continuum, their use and application is more dynamic, and elements of these three *worlds* are found in many contemporary entrepreneurship education programs.

It is argued that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education should be seen as the process of actively engaging in knowledge construction, rather than merely the acquisition of a discrete set of business skills (Volkman et al., 2009). Thus, drawing substantially on Neck and Greene's (2011) argument, and their suggestions that teaching and learning entrepreneurship comprises a multidisciplinary approach to a method rather than a process, the section to follow will present an argument for teaching and learning entrepreneurship from a constructivist educational paradigm.

2.2.4 Entrepreneurship Education and Constructivism

As companies continue to demand a more entrepreneurially-minded workforce, especially with regard to students graduating from business schools, prospective students are likewise demanding a business education that is less in the image of the Fortune 500 Company (Solomon et al., 2002). A call for entrepreneurship education that is experientially based and constructed around the realities of the business world has led to increased interest in alternative pedagogical models (Isaacs et al., 2007; Solomon et al., 2002).

Entrepreneurship has been considered to be a predominantly economic activity, and teaching and learning to advance the ideals of entrepreneurship have typically followed this conceptualisation (Hill, McGowan, & Drummond, 1999). An approach to learning that is classroom-bound and focused on process, procedures and outcomes may broadly mirror an entrepreneurial view that seeks to define and develop specific traits and behaviour, and which isolates entrepreneurship from the specific skills that many entrepreneurs possess (Erikson, 2003). As broad understanding of the entrepreneurial process shifts away from a logical *cause-and-effect* construct to one approximating the entrepreneurial ecosystem suggested by the WEF studies (Wong et al., 2011), it becomes necessary to reconsider the mode of teaching and learning (Rae, 2000).

Educational practice suggests that learning occurs through the intervention of a teacher or educator (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 1992). Learning theory, especially experiential learning theory, would indicate that learning occurs when an individual interacts with a learning situation (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1970; Kolb, 1984) or with society (Jarvis, 2009).

Modes of entrepreneurial learning can be broadly classified into three approaches: an *experiential approach*, a *cognitive/affective approach*, and a *networking approach* (Man, 2006). An *experiential approach*, conceptually located within the work of Kolb (1984), suggests that learning occurs and is modified through direct experience. Experience-based learning involves a discipline of critical reflection, which is the process of making sense out of each experience. The cyclical nature of experiential learning requires active interpretation as actions and activities that had a positive outcome are repeated, and those that did not yield success are discontinued (Man, 2006). A model that crosses the experiential and cognitive/affective approaches (Timmons & Spinelli, 2007) is built around the *Johari Window*. The *Johari Window* is a model of self-awareness and its relationship to others. It presents four quadrants of awareness mapped against what is known to the self and what is known to others (Luft, 1961). The model promotes self-assessment by the entrepreneur, along with providing feedback to expose blind and unknown areas.

A *cognitive/affective approach* focuses upon the acquisition and structuring of knowledge and information. It builds on the work of social cognition by regarding entrepreneurial learning as ‘a mental process of acquiring, storing and using entrepreneurial knowledge in long-term memory’ (Man, 2006, p. 311).

A *networking approach* to entrepreneurial learning creates a link between knowledge and the acquisition of skills of business owners from their social networks and social relationships. These relationships include other business owners, customers, suppliers, formal university education, parents, mentors and professional associations. Early interactions are noted as being of great value in the formation of new ventures (Man, 2006).

A more recently explored mode of entrepreneurial learning is through the mechanism of stories and storytelling. This is based on the discourse-making nature of the human brain, a mechanism that deals effectively with complexity and sense-making (Hjorth, 2011; Hjorth & Johannisson, 1997; Rae, 2000). Approaching the topic of entrepreneurial learning from a social constructivist viewpoint through the analysis of entrepreneurial narratives, one finds that learning occurs around three themes: *personal and social emergence*, *contextual learning*, and *negotiated enterprise* (Rae, 2000). *Personal and social emergence* refers to the creation of an entrepreneurial identity, formed through early life experiences, family and social relationships, education and career formation. *Contextual learning* occurs during participation in networks, as well as community and industry experiences. The *negotiated enterprise* refers to the conceptualisation of an enterprise through relationships with others rather than through the actions of an individual alone (Rae, 2000).

The blending of these approaches in the learning of entrepreneurship is supported by Löbler (2006), who has suggested a number of principles for entrepreneurship education based on a constructivist approach. The most important principles are as follows:

- The ability to set one's own goals within a living case.
- The reflection on experiences of working and learning.
- Gathering information and support only on demand.
- Teamwork and an almost teacher-independent form of grading.

Constructivism is based on the understanding that an individual constructs knowledge on the basis of personal experience (Löbler, 2006). Constructivism is closely aligned to student-centred learning, in which 'the focus ... is on individual learners' experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs'

(Harkema & Schout, 2008, p. 517). Student-centred and constructivist learning are not dissimilar to problem-based learning, which has been shown to be valuable in the development of an entrepreneurial mindset (Hanke, 2009). A constructivist approach has been shown to be of even greater value within entrepreneurship education, when students are engaged in learning and the actual creation of a new venture (Thompson, Scott, & Gibson, 2010).

This section has sought to support a pedagogical approach to entrepreneurship education that is experiential, student-centric, and structured around a constructivist educational paradigm. Experiential learning, a learning theory based on the constructivist paradigm, will be discussed further in the following section, along with a deeper examination of the constructivist learning paradigm.

2.3 Constructivism as a Paradigm of Learning

This section presents an overview of constructivism as a paradigm of learning, with a particular emphasis on experiential learning theory. Constructivism, from a learning perspective, is understood in the context of this study as being different from but influenced by epistemological constructionism. While this section will discuss constructivism as a learning paradigm, this is influenced by one's epistemological stance (Hein, 1991). The paradigm (both epistemologically and pedagogically) makes a distinctive break with the logical realism of the objectivist paradigm, in which reality is seen as external to the observer, or, in the case of learning, the experiencer or student. Constructivism distances itself from the belief that 'facts speak for themselves, that knowledge is the reflection of ontological reality, and that language objectively refers to this reality' (Laroche & Bednarz, 1998, p. 5).

Constructivism, in a pedagogical sense, has emerged as primarily a distancing from the behaviourist objectivity and the role of the teacher as the centre of knowledge (Boghossian, 2006). Thus, from an educational perspective, constructivists argue that reality is individually constructed and that multiple realities exist. Reality is not *out there*, but is constructed through the student's engagement with the world and attempts at sense-making (Bichelmeyer & Hsu, 1999). Hein (1991) suggests that the principles of learning from a constructivist perspective can be seen to include the following learning attributes:

- Learning involves the student in an active way through engaging with the world. Learning is a process where meaning is constructed through the use of sensory input.
- Learning involves both the construction of meaning and the construction of systems of meaning. We learn to learn as we learn.
- Physical activity is important, especially for children. However, the predominant action associated with learning is a mental process.
- Learning always involves language, and the language we use influences our process of learning.
- Learning is an intrinsically social activity, connected to family, peers, teachers, or casual acquaintances.
- Learning is linked to context. We learn in relation to prior knowledge and experience, and our fears, beliefs and prejudices.
- Learning builds on existing knowledge. All new knowledge is assimilated through the structure of previous knowledge and experience.
- Learning takes time and requires reflection.

- Motivation is integral to learning. It can be understood as acknowledging the use of and need for new knowledge.

2.3.1 Experiential Learning Theory

A central feature of learning from the constructivist perspective is the role of experience in forming and framing knowledge (Dewey, 1938), as well as the act of reflection in making sense of that experience (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985b; Boud & Walker, 1991). This section describes experiential learning theory, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, and critique aimed at experiential learning in general.

It may be argued that experiential learning is a redundant term, as most learning occurs through some form of experience (Moon, 2004). Arrow (1962) has gone as far as to argue that learning is experience's by-product. However, learning from experience and experiential learning, while seemingly synonymous, may well be different processes, albeit with similar outcomes. Usher (1993) suggests that learning from experience is part of our daily life, while experiential learning is an aspect of a discourse that has everyday experience as 'its subject and which constructs it in a certain way' (Usher, 1993, p. 169). Experiential learning is the discourse through which everyday learning experiences are understood, theorised and transformed into learning or knowledge (Usher, 1993; Usher & Solomon, 1999).

Experiential learning has become an important area for educational research and practice (Fenwick, 2000; Michelson, 1996). It addresses many of the limitations of traditional, classroom-based learning by being learner-focused and very often learner-controlled (Weil & McGill, 1989). It engages the student in his or her immediate context and environment and thereby creates relevance (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993). The importance which experiential learning has placed upon prior and

informal learning makes this learning modality immediately accessible and claims to support a more democratic and egalitarian view of education (Freire, 1970).

Weil and McGill (1989) suggest a framework for explaining the theoretical influences and application of experiential learning. They suggest that four *villages* (see Figure 2) can be discerned in the milieu of experience-based learning theory.

Figure 2. The four villages of experiential learning (from Weil & McGill, 1989)



Village One has a focus on assessment and the process of recognition for and accreditation of prior (often informal) learning. The emphasis in this village is on finding new pathways into higher education as well as work opportunities and professional accreditation and recognition. The activity of recognition of prior

learning is often concerned with identifying and valuing life experiences that are not valued by formal learning institutions (Weil & McGill, 1989). Village Two is concerned with secondary (post-school) training and education. This village encompasses the full range of philosophies and practices of higher education and the adult learning environment. The core theory of this village is that all prior learning activities and experiences are valued, and that learning is 'active, meaningful and relevant to real life agenda' (Weil & McGill, 1989, p. 7). Village Three brings into focus the role of experiential learning as a mechanism to effect social change. The distinction between *learning from experience* and *experiential learning* becomes important in this village; the former suggesting that individual experience is indivisible from societal context and patterns of power (Weil & McGill, 1989). Village Four examines experience as a lever for personal growth and development.

These approaches to learning may include both therapeutic and interpersonal goals, as well as more developmental objectives (Weil & McGill, 1989). A certain degree of context neutrality is required, as the student is encouraged to focus entirely on his or her experiences and the reaction thereto as the primary learning moment. While the Villages are presented as discrete approaches or philosophies, the power of experience-based learning lies in the inter-relationship and interplay between these Villages.

The framework discussed above is by no means the final word on experiential learning theory or models of learning that use experience as their base. Research and discourse regarding experiential learning is substantial. This includes theorising that may not form part of the *Four Villages* construct. Examples include experiential learning from a post-modern perspective (Usher, 2009); conceptions of experiential learning from the perspective of cognitive psychology (Fenwick, 2000); research,

theory and practice related to reflection as it relates to experience and the cycle of experiential learning (Boud & Walker, 1991; Jordi, 2011; Kolb, 1984); and experiential learning and humanism (Michelson, 1996, 1999).

With the above discussion as contextual background, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle can be located within the meeting point between Village Two (experiential learning in secondary training and education), Village Three (experiential learning as social change), and Village Four (experiential learning as a mechanism for personal transformation and development).

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb defines experiential learning as 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it' (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). His work, widely regarded as the seminal contemporary theory on experiential learning, is firmly rooted in cognitive psychology and the work of Dewey (1938), Piaget (1930) and Lewin (1952) (Kolb, 1984). Dewey's interest in progressive education, his early work around reflective practice, and his emphasis on experience as the source of formal and informal learning, influenced Kolb's work. Dewey makes the case for experience-based learning, saying:

When education is based in theory and practice upon experience, it goes without saying that the organized subject matter of the adult and the specialist cannot provide the starting point. One of the most fundamental principles of the scientific organisation of knowledge is the principle of cause-and-effect ... certainly very different from the way in which it can be approached in the experience of the young (Dewey, 1938, p. 83).

The preceding quotation, taken in the context of the time and the prevailing educational theories of behaviourism, illustrates how important Dewey's work was in moving educationalists away from the structure of behaviourism and towards a more experiential or constructivist paradigm.

Piaget's (1930) interest in child development and, more importantly, in intelligence, influenced Kolb's views with regard to how the intellect is shaped through experience and through the interaction between the individual and the environment. Lewin's (1948) work with action research and group dynamics, along with his beliefs in the democratic values of education (shared with Dewey), likewise influenced the development of experiential learning theory in general and Kolb's work in particular.

Kolb's depiction of learning as a cycle also draws on the models put forward by Lewin, Dewey and Piaget. All three models represent learning in a staged cycle.

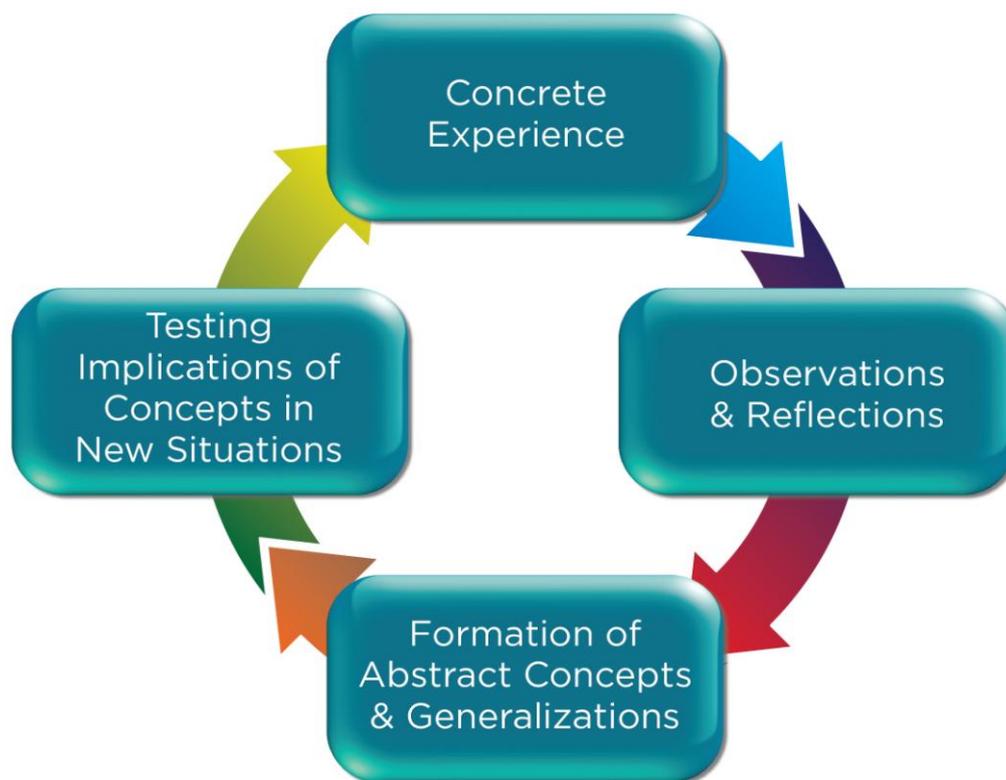
Lewin (1952) suggested that learning from experience occurs in situations that are unstructured; in other words, where some element of the unknown required action. Once action is taken, structuralisation occurs, and knowledge and learning become functional elements. Lewin uses the analogy of arriving in a city one has never visited, and slowly developing an understanding of the route between one's desired destinations. Many parts of the city remain unexplored (and are thus unstructured), but as the traveller develops familiarity, knowledge and awareness expands, and the degree of cognitive structure increases. On a social level, Lewin's theory is not dissimilar to that of Luft's (1961) *Johari Window*, discussed earlier in this chapter.

Lewin's model (as cited in Kolb, 1984) depicts four stages of learning (see Figure 3 overleaf) from concrete experience, to observation and reflection, to formation of

abstract concepts and generalisation, and finally to the testing of concepts in new situations.

Dewey (1938) wrote of the importance of experience in the educational process. Referring to his *experiential continuum*, he suggested a student should ‘discriminate between experiences that are worth while educationally and those that are not’ (p. 33). Dewey proposes that the criteria for experience are growth and interaction. Growth defines the process of moving along a continuum of experience, however this can also lead to destructive growth (for example a life of crime), and needs to be tempered against interaction with the social context and environment.

Figure 3. Lewin's Experiential Learning Cycle (adapted from Kolb, 1984)

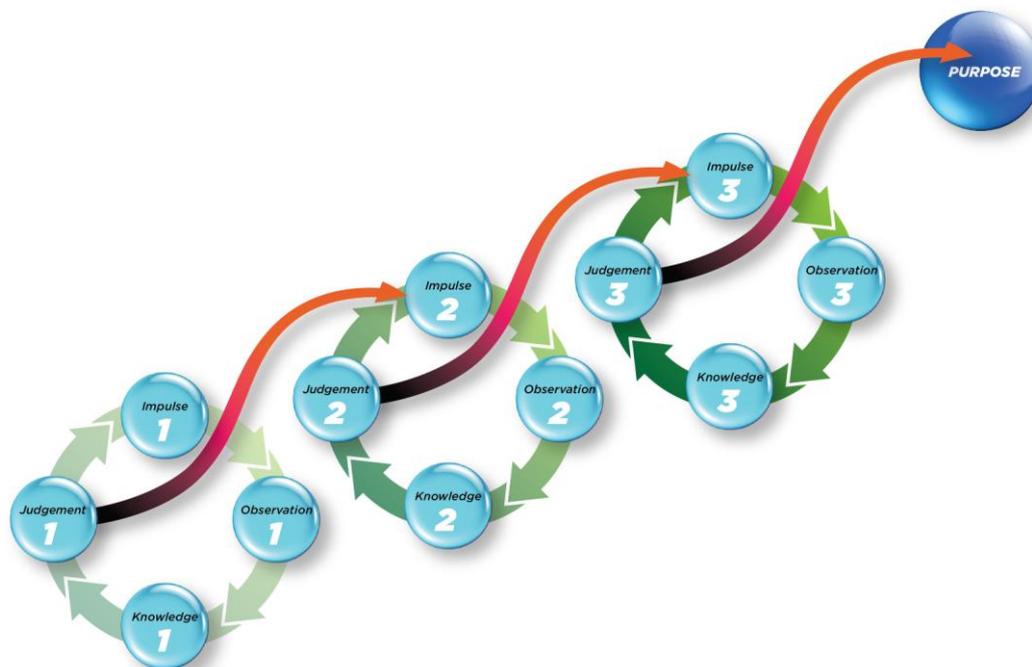


Dewey (as cited in Kolb, 1984) likewise creates a cycle (see Figure 4 overleaf). He suggests, however, that experience is in fact the trigger of an impulse that in turn

leads to observation. Knowledge follows observations and leads to judgement, which leads on to the first stage of the next cycle – experience/impulse.

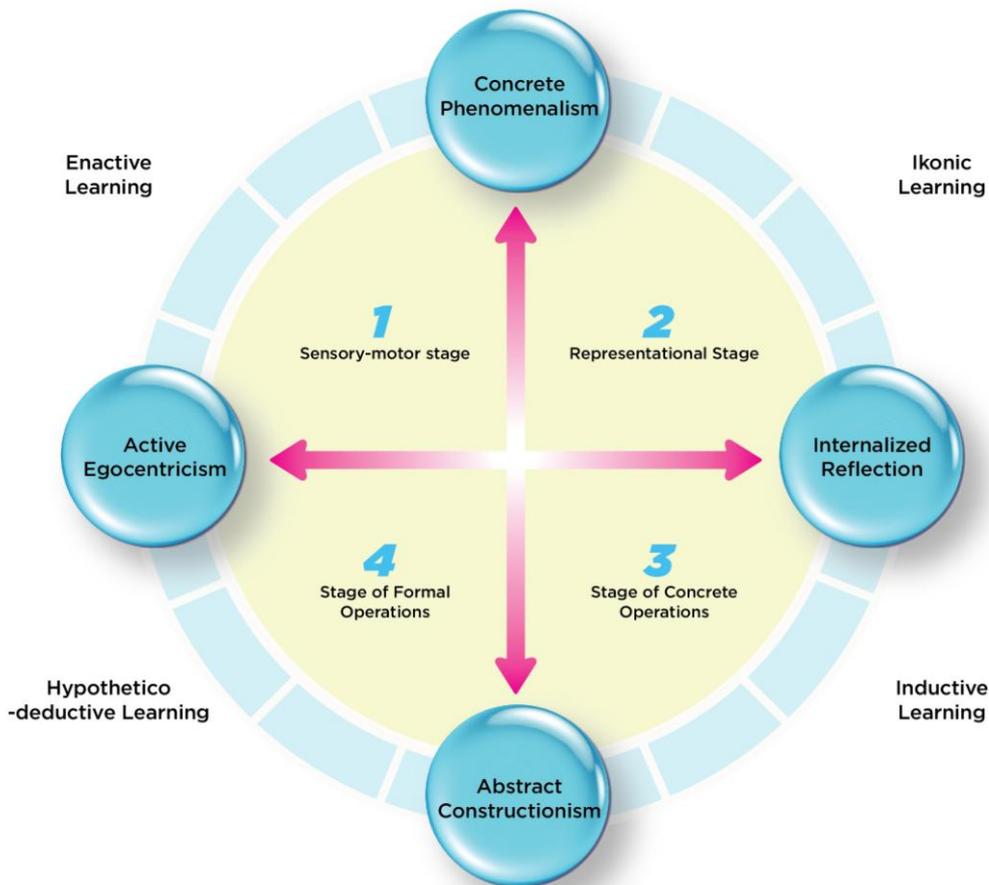
Dewey wrote that the word *experience* did not fully illustrate its role in learning and education. What he proposed was continuity of experience within the context of a social group, or ‘the means of social continuity of life’ (Dewey, 2009, p. 6).

Figure 4. Dewey's Experiential Learning Cycle (adapted from Kolb, 1984)



Piaget’s model (see Figure 5 overleaf), built around two continua – experience and concept, reflection and action – represents a model of learning and cognitive development to adulthood. The now well-known model depicts a phased movement from the sensory-motor stage (learning occurs through handling, touch and feeling), to the representative stage (learning occurs through images of the world), to concrete operations (learning occurs through relationships and induction), and then to formal operations (learning integrated through the previous three stages and focused through logico-deductive reasoning).

Figure 5. Piaget's Model of Learning (adapted from Kolb, 1984)



Kolb's model is also built around a number of characteristics of experiential learning, not dissimilar to those suggested by Hein (1991) with respect to constructivist learning theory. These are as follows:

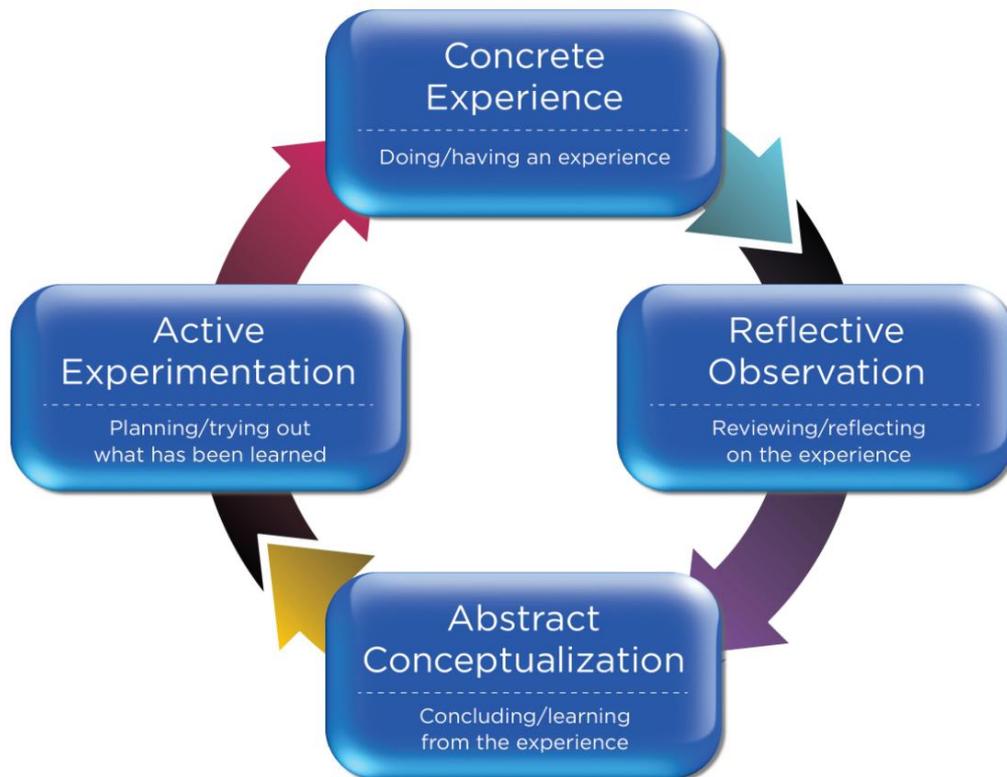
- Learning is best understood and conceived of as a process, not as a series of learning outcomes.
- Learning is continuous and is derived from and tested out in the ongoing experiences of the student.
- Learning requires the resolution of conflicting methods of adaptation to the world.

- Learning is by its nature a holistic process of social, environmental and physical adaptation.
- Learning is transactional with respect to the learner and his or her environment.
- Learning is the process of creating knowledge (Kolb, 1984, p. 27).

These elements of experiential learning have been echoed in work by, for example, Mezirow (1991), whose model of transformational learning connects well with Kolb's idea of adaptation. Weill and McGill (1989, p. 11) making substantial reference to Kolb's work, again offer support for his characteristics of experiential learning, saying that 'experiential learning is seen as an integrative process ... [in which] ... [the] process and outcomes are inextricably linked ...'. The experiential learning propositions put forward by Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) closely mirror the characteristics suggested by Kolb, with the exception of reference to the socio-emotional context of the student and the role of past and present experience as being influential with respect to learning. They suggest that 'the past creates expectations which influence the present and learners carry with them their socio-emotional context which is their set of expectations about what can and cannot be done' (Boud et al., 1993, p. 15).

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) is built upon the foundation of the models and theories, and characteristics discussed earlier in this section, and to a large extent, within the context of the constructivist learning paradigms in general. As discussed in Chapter 1, the ELC is built around two continua, much like Piaget's model: concrete experience and abstract conceptualisation on the Y-axis, and active experimentation and reflective observation in the X-axis. Figure 6 illustrates the ELC.

Figure 6. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (adapted from Kolb, 1984)



Kolb's work and experiential learning in general have not been without critique. With the publication of *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Kolb, 1984), Kolb's work around learning style theory came into the spotlight. The nature of this critique was related to the empirical evidence presented in support of Kolb's learning theory, and the fact that the 'results spuriously corroborate the theory' (Freedman & Stumpf, 1980, p. 447). Kolb responded to these allegations, claiming that the authors had not fully considered the theoretical underpinnings of his theory, or the nature of the testing of the Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb, 1981). In an article by Freedman and Stumpf (1981), the authors suggest that Kolb has been guilty of over-generalisation and that their comments related to the Learning Styles Inventory in particular and not experiential learning theory in general. Since the publication of Kolb's 1984 book (*Experiential Learning:*

Experience as the Source of Learning and Development), criticism seems to have been aimed less at his theory and possibly more at its dominance in the literature of experiential learning (Freedman & Stumpf, 1980; Stumpf & Freedman, 1981).

Michelson (1996, 1999) challenges the manner in which experiential learning theory treats 'experience as the raw material for learning and reflection as a highly cognitive processing stage in which learning takes place' (Michelson, 1996, p. 438). She goes on to suggest that experiential learning should be a union between mind and body, and that formative experiential learning theory does not fully account for the role of society, or the inherent race, gender or class differentials that are complicating factors for learning (Michelson, 1999).

Fenwick (2000) argues for an expansion of conventional ideas of experiential learning, suggesting that greater emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the processes that are regarded as experiential learning, and in so doing challenging the dominant views of experience-based learning.

2.3.2 Approaches to Learning

The concept of *approaches to learning* is based on the work of Marton and colleagues (Marton & Saljo, 1984), who examined how students approached the reading of a given text. Some students sought to uncover the meaning behind the text, while others tried to memorise the words. The terms *deep* approach (referring to the former) and *surface* approach (referring to the latter) to learning emerged from this research.

A deep approach to learning is based on the learner's intrinsic motivation, and the search for meaning through the learning experience. A deep approach to learning is characterised by the student possessing a substantial volume of relevant and useful

content; his or her ability to operate at a high level of conceptualisation; his or her ability to exhibit reflective self-awareness; an obvious enjoyment of the task; and the desire to invest effort and time in the learning activity (Biggs & Moore, 1993). A deep approach to learning, when viewed from the perspective of problem-based learning, leads to the creation of a highly-independent learner, able to internalise the values and objectives of the learning experience (Mauffette, Kandlibinder, & Soucisse, 2001). This deep approach to learning is similar to Schön's (1988) reflective practice, in which a professional practitioner has to move from the relative safety of positivistic technical skill and competence to the 'indeterminate zones of practice – uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict' (Schön, 1988, p. 6).

By contrast, a surface approach to learning is characterised by a desire to learn, motivated by external pressure and negative or positive reinforcement and consequences (Marton & Booth, 1997). The learner will focus on rote memorisation of what seem to be the most important elements of the work, showing low levels of task engagement, and lacking an overall focus on completing the task. There is little evidence of metacognition, although this may appear through rote learning of important data (Biggs & Moore, 1993). A surface approach to learning is characterised by the student 'absorbing as much of the content as is necessary for the task at hand' (Moon, 2004, p. 59).

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented an examination of pertinent literature related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Definitions of entrepreneurship, while lacking any unifying theory, are representative of a multidisciplinary view of entrepreneurial behaviour, and cover a wide spectrum of theories, ideas, and domains

of focus. This chapter has presented literature to support a definition of entrepreneurship education that is centred on opportunity recognition and cognitive ability, also understood as an entrepreneurial mindset. The definitions of Thompson (2004) and Timmons and Spinelli (2007) are presented as the guiding definitions for the current study. The difference between entrepreneurship, small business, and general business education are important for any discussion related to entrepreneurship education. The emphasis of entrepreneurship education is on high-growth and high-profitability businesses.

Entrepreneurship education can be understood at a macro systemic level as an ecosystem that includes government, academic institutions, and business. This is highly reflective of many entrepreneurship education initiatives, both in South Africa and internationally. Entrepreneurship education can be mapped across a continuum from initiatives viewing it as a process to those viewing it as a method (Neck & Greene, 2011). Approaching the subject as a method leads to a pedagogical stance that is rooted in constructivism. This supports the multidisciplinary view of entrepreneurship, and serves to engage, from an educational perspective, with a 'learner's experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs' (Harkema & Schout, 2008, p. 517). The current study argues for a constructivist approach to entrepreneurship education.

Constructivism was presented as the overarching learning paradigm for the current study. Constructivism, not dissimilar to epistemological constructionism, suggests that there is no reality *out there* that needs to be discovered objectively, but rather that students construct their reality through their engagement with the world. Constructivism draws on cognitive theory, in that from a learning perspective it

suggests a role for internal mental processes that move the student to an internal locus of control.

Experiential learning draws from constructivism in suggesting how learners use a reflective process to extract meaning from learning experiences. Kolb's ELC provides a much-used model of experiential learning.

This chapter, drawing on Marton (1984), distinguished between deep and surface approaches to learning. These are used to describe the manner in which students approach a learning experience, and illustrate a model of internally-motivated learning (deep approach) versus one characterised by an external motivation (surface approach).

The following chapter presents the methodological framework for the current study, describing the theoretical and epistemological influences for the thesis.

3 Methodological Framework

This chapter sets out the methodological framework adopted for this thesis. A useful model for understanding research methodology in the social sciences has been provided by Crotty (1998). He proposes a hierarchical four-stage model of epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and method as a means to frame the methodological approach of a research project. Drawing from Crotty (1998), the following discussion examines paradigm, epistemology, and methodology.

Methodology is a discussion of the reasons why the researcher chose a particular research position, why the research study was designed in a particular way, what questions were asked by the researcher, and how issues of data confidence were addressed through the collection and analysis process (Case & Light, 2010). Method, on the other hand, is described as ‘the tools and procedures we use for our inquiries’ (Cousin, 2009, p. 6). Issues of method are addressed in Chapter 5.

In identifying an appropriate methodology or mix of methodologies, it is inevitable that one is drawn into the debate regarding quantitative versus qualitative methods, as if these broad terms are useful polar opposites for locating a study’s methodological roots. Some scholars have, however, suggested that this dichotomy may be important only at the level of the research method (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Scott & Morrison, 2005; Seltzer & Rose, 2006).

The current study is concerned with the experience of students as they interact with their world. In particular, it is focused upon how students experienced a programme of learning. However, the current study does not make statements about the programme of learning itself, but rather examines the students’ experience of that

programme. Research of this nature is referred to as second-order research (Marton, 1986).

To answer the research questions developed in Chapter 1, the appropriate research methodology is phenomenography. This research approach is concerned with people's conceptions of the world, and describes 'an aspect of the world as it appears to the individual' (Marton, 1986, p. 33). Phenomenography forms part of the naturalistic paradigm (discussed below), and, along with grounded theory, is drawn on in the development of the methodological framework adopted for this study.

Issues of trustworthiness are dealt with in the latter part of the chapter, as are the influences and impact of the selected methodological framework on the chosen methods for research.

3.1 The Naturalistic Paradigm

A paradigm can be defined as a system shaped by axiomatic fundamentals (Guba, 1990). Paradigms can be further understood as 'a set of assumptions about the social world, and about what constitutes proper techniques and topics for enquiry' (Punch, 1998, p. 28). The current study regards paradigms as a higher-level abstraction than the research approaches known as quantitative and qualitative research, often associated with particular methodologies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that paradigms exist on a continuum from positivistic/rationalistic to the naturalistic.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define a positivist paradigm as encompassing the following five assumptions:

- Belief in a single tangible reality.
- The separation of the knower and the known.
- The independence of time and space.

- The assumption of linear causality.
- The assumption of value freedom.

Guba and Lincoln (1982) contrast this with a post-positivist view, which they call the *naturalistic paradigm*. This paradigm is defined through five axioms that contrast the positivist worldview. These are as follows:

- A reality that is divergent, holistic and intangible.
- An interrelated relationship between knower and known.
- Contextually bound truth statements.
- Action that is explained through a multiplicity of interacting factors.
- The belief that research is value-bound.

The nature of the research questions in the current study, being contextualised within the realm of entrepreneurship education, finds greater commonality with the axiomatic stance of the naturalistic paradigm than with that of the positivistic paradigm. Educational research deals with human behaviour and human experience within the context of social concerns and social values (Phillips, 2006). This lends support to the appropriateness of a naturalistic paradigm in answering the questions posed by the current study. The positivist/scientific approach ‘fails to take into account our unique ability to interpret our experiences and represent them to ourselves’ (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 19). In addition, it has previously been argued that a constructivist approach to understanding learning is appropriate, which has better coherence with the naturalistic than the positivistic paradigm.

3.2 Issues of Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the kinds of knowledge generated from a research endeavour, and how the knowledge will be perceived, understood and *trusted* (Lancy, 1993).

Epistemology can be further understood as the basis of knowledge, how it is acquired, its form and nature, and how it can be shared and communicated with others (Cohen et al., 2000). While there are many epistemological worldviews, a distinction between objectivist and constructionist is a valuable marker at the outset of this discussion. An objectivist epistemology is one in which reality is the same for all people, and through the *scientific method* this shared reality can be made clear. Objectivism is a view of the world in which reality is viewed as quantifiable, universal and objective. By contrast, a constructionist epistemology is subject to time, context, history, culture, social norms, and politics, and is best understood as a reality that is socially constructed by and between the people who experience that reality.

Ontology is linked to epistemology in as much as the latter refers to 'what it means to know' and the former refers to 'understanding what is' (Crotty, 1998, p. 11). Guba (1990) argues that an objectivist ontology sees the world as driven by natural laws and understands reality as being free of time or space contextualisation. Its epistemological frame is one of objectivity, freeing the researcher from the inherent bias contained in personal values. The methodological approach for a positivist paradigm is one characterised by experimentation, driven by hypotheses or questions stated in advance, and forming the basis of controlled and replicable tests. The scientific method, and the approach of a positivist paradigm, is built upon processes and procedures that illustrate a clear path as to how the findings were arrived at, and provide the means for fellow researchers to repeat the study and to expect similar results (Cohen et al., 2000).

Constructionist ontology sees reality as an experientially- and socially-based construction dependent on the individual and his or her context (Crotty, 1998). The epistemological frame is monistic (as opposed to the dualistic frame of the

objectivist), and suggests that the research findings are the result of the interplay between knower and known; the findings are thus in fact co-created. The methodology associated with a constructionist epistemology and ontology is one in which the range and variety of social constructions are compared and brought into a position of as much consensus as is possible (Crotty, 1998).

The differences between an objectivist and constructionist epistemology and ontology are reflected in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Objectivist vs. Constructionist epistemology and ontology

	Objectivist	Constructionist
Epistemology	Reality is the same for all people. Reality is quantifiable, universal and objective.	Reality is subject to time, context, history, culture, social norms and politics. Reality is socially constructed.
Ontology	World is driven by natural laws. Reality is objective, free of time and space.	Reality is an experientially-based social construction dependent on individual and context.

The current study is informed by a constructionist epistemology. Within the context of this thesis, constructionism will be regarded as one of the interpretative approaches (Goulding, 2002). These approaches differ from the objectivist tradition (Guba, 1990). The constructionists understand and see facts as facts only within the context of a theoretical framework. The problem of induction implies that there are a vast number of theories that can be put forward to explain any given number of *facts*. Constructionist theory is value-laden, and objectivity is simply not possible. As a result, the inquiry is always shaped by the interaction of the inquirer and the inquired (Guba, 1990).

The ontological and epistemological position of this thesis is one in which the researcher is deeply ‘inside the research setting’ (Cousin, 2009, p. 6), and as such, the view on reality will be influenced by this subjectivity. Absolute objectivity is impossible, and in meeting the objectives of this study, a high degree of trust was required; this trust could not be built from a distance (Cousin, 2009). The choice to follow a constructionist epistemology for the current study was further supported by two differences between objectivism and constructionism. Firstly, that the findings of the research need to be understood within the context in which they are observed, and secondly, that the research seeks to find insights and understanding rather than prediction and explanation (Cousin, 2009). Phenomenography in particular seeks to analyse people’s conception of the world rather than the world itself (Marton, 1986). Constructionism was therefore adopted as the epistemological stance for the current research as it places the required ‘emphasis on human meaning-making activities’ (Cousin, 2009, p. 11) that were required to answer the research questions.

3.3 Methodological Influences

The current study draws on methodologies that were deemed most appropriate in addressing the research questions. This section will briefly describe the two methodologies, namely phenomenography and grounded theory, in as much as they apply to this specific research context.

3.3.1 Phenomenography

The current study has drawn substantial philosophical, methodological, and tactical support from the research approach known as phenomenography. This research approach began in the early 1970s in Sweden as a challenge to the prevailing positivist paradigm occurring in the educational research arena (Dall’Alba, 1996). It

deviated from the traditional view of educational psychologists at the time through an interest in how individuals perceived and conceptualised their world (Marton, 1986), when seen from their perspective.

Phenomenography differs from phenomenology in that the former places emphasis on the different ways of experiencing a phenomenon, whereas the latter is focused on the commonality in the shared experience of a phenomenon (Marton, 1989; Van Manen, 1990). A further difference is that the phenomenographic unit of analysis is the experience of the person of the phenomenon, whereas phenomenology takes the phenomenon itself as its focal point (Case & Light, 2010).

Phenomenographic research is defined by Marton (1986, p. 31) as a 'research method adapted for mapping the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them'.

The nature of phenomenography refers to people's conceptions of their reality through confrontation with phenomena in everyday life (Bowden, 2000). Phenomenography does not seek to capture the full extent of experience, but rather aims at a specific level of describing, that illustrates what phenomena are seen as, appear to be, the difference in meanings, and their relationship to the context and other phenomena (Marton, 1994). Phenomenography takes into account the belief that people are 'hermeneutic beings making sense of what they see, hear and read' (Saljo, 1996, p. 22).

An essential aspect of phenomenography is that it has a non-dualistic ontology, and is regarded as a second-order research methodology. Dualism is associated with a positivist, scientific methodology that separates the knower from the known, or the

researcher from the world (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In a non-dualistic ontology, subject and object are not separate; there is not an objective and a subjective world. There is only one world, which is 'simultaneously objective and subjective' (Marton, 2000, p. 105). Thus, phenomenography challenges the positivist paradigm by arguing that the object of experience cannot be separated from the manner in which it is experienced. As noted, phenomenography, furthermore, is a second-order research methodology. Second-order research differs from first-order research in that the former examines the ways in which something is experienced, where as the latter examines the thing itself (Marton, 1986). A first order perspective (used in phenomenology) places emphasis on the world as it is experienced by people (Marton & Booth, 1997), whereas a phenomenographic approach perspective is where 'the underlying ways of experiencing the world, phenomena, and situations are made the object of research' (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 118).

In phenomenography, the unit of analysis is the experience of the student. *Experience* as used here is synonymous with 'ways of understanding', and 'ways of comprehending' (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 114); 'ways of seeing', and 'ways of apprehending' (Marton & Pong, 2005, p. 336). These experiences refer to a relationship between the experienced and the experiencer (Marton & Booth, 1997), and imply a unique and original view of the world (Marton & Booth, 1997). Despite its centrality to phenomenography, the word *experience*, as can be seen from the above synonyms, is in wide and varied use (Bowden, 2000; Marton & Booth, 1997; Marton & Pong, 2005). This focus on conceptions (note the plural) is what makes phenomenography such a useful and valuable methodology to examine the complete range of experiences within an educational context (Bowden, 2000; Case & Light, 2010).

Conceptions are widely used in phenomenography, and can be understood as the ways in which people experience a specific aspect of reality (Sandbergh, 1997). Bowden (2000, p. 17) suggests that while conceptions are not visible, they are ‘tacit, implicit or assumed’. A conception has two interconnected aspects. A meaning, referred to as the referential aspect, and a structure, referred to as the structural aspect (Marton & Pong, 2005). In order to see a phenomenon, we need to separate it from its environment. However, as we separate it from its environment we embody the phenomenon with meaning. This represents the interwoven and simultaneous nature of a phenomenon’s structure and meaning (Marton & Booth, 1997).

The group of conceptions is captured by the phenomenographer as categories of description (Marton & Pong, 2005). Categories of description can be understood as the categorization of an individual’s conception of a phenomenon. The objective of a phenomenographic study is to ‘identify and describe individuals’ conceptions of some aspect of reality as faithfully as possible’ (Sandbergh, 1997, p. 130). These conceptions illustrate the variation in ways that people experience phenomena in their world. The capturing of these conceptions into categories of description, present the variation of experience (Marton & Booth, 1997). Categories of description need to fulfil three criteria to be regarded as methodologically grounded. Firstly, each category should depict a unique way of experiencing the phenomenon. Secondly, the categories should be logically, usually hierarchically, connected to each other. Thirdly, the system of categories of description should be parsimonious, representing as few categories as is possible to explain the variation in experience (Marton & Booth, 1997). The construction of categories of description involves an interaction between the data and the researcher, in which a balance is sought between

representing the data in a way that is faithful to the conception, and developing a logical system of categories (Walsh, 2000).

The system of categories of description is called an *outcome space*. An outcome space can be defined as ‘the complex of categories of description comprising distinct groupings of aspects of the phenomenon and the relationships between them’ (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 125). Thus, individual conceptions are represented in categories of description, which are, in turn, understood in the relational form of the outcome space (Booth, 2001; Marton & Pong, 2005).

Phenomenography has informed both the methodology and method of the current study. Of greatest importance to the methodological framing of the current study, and the primary reason for adopting phenomenography, is the collective focus on the learning experience. This has been useful from a pragmatic viewpoint, as it has allowed for a wider study with a larger group of Programme participants. From a methodological point of view it has allowed for the collective programmatic experience to be given primacy over the individual experience. Phenomenography provides structure to the data analysis component of this study through the use of categories of description as the means to understand students’ experiences of the programme under study. The non-dualistic nature of phenomenography allowed for a blurring of the traditional positivist boundaries between the researcher and the research subject and context.

3.3.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory has been another methodological influence for developing the framework for the current study. Elements of grounded theory’s method and process

have been useful in framing the data collection, analysis, and subsequent examination of experiential learning theory.

Grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss and first presented in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), draws its evolutionary influence from symbolic interactionism (Goulding, 2002, p. 39).

Grounded Theory is rooted in sociology and is an attempt to put forward an alternative to logico-deductive methods, through the *grounding* of theory in data that have been collected through a process of systematic social research (Goulding, 2002).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) approached grounded theory from the context of their early academic training. While this difference in worldviews, the positivist stance of Columbia University and the pragmatism of the Chicago School, led to the very creation of grounded theory, it likewise led to the split in views as to how the theory should develop and evolve over time. Glaser (1967) held true to his early beliefs in that grounded theory remained, for him, a method of discovery with categories emerging from the data, often within a confined empirical context. Strauss, later collaborating with Corbin, took a more procedural view of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), which was a departure from Glaser (1967) who saw procedures as processes that forced the data into a number of preconceived categories. This, according to Glaser (1967), was a substantial deviation from the original tenets of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006).

Notwithstanding these differences between Glaser's (1967) grounded theory and that put forward by Strauss and Corbin (Clarke, 2007), there are certain fundamental elements to grounded theory research (Charmaz, 2006, p. 5):

- 'Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis.

- Constructing codes and categories from the data, and not from preconceived hypotheses.
- Making constant comparisons at each stage of data analysis.
- Advancing theory development during each stage of data collection and analysis.’

Grounded theory enjoys many similarities with and certain differences from traditional qualitative research (Goulding, 2002). Consistent with the interpretivist (constructionist) epistemology is a belief that theory developed through the grounded theory process is not the discovery of reality *out there*, but rather the result of an analysis of the data and the formulation of a perspective, influenced by the inquirer (Goulding, 2002). It takes as given that enquiry is contextually situated, and that data and subsequent theory are value-bound (Goulding, 2002). This also serves as a key point of difference; the development of a theory as the end-point in a grounded theory analysis implies a certain investigation into causality, something not common among traditional qualitative methodologies (Goulding, 2002).

A defining characteristic of grounded theory is the concept of comparative analysis. Comparison itself is not unique to grounded theory, however, its role ‘as a strategic method for generating theory’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 21) places it at the fulcrum of the grounded theory process. Comparison serves many research disciplines; its role in grounded theory is not only connected to issues of validity and reliability, but more importantly, is used to generate conceptual categories, a cornerstone of theory development (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Furthermore, grounded theory makes use of theoretical sampling; a process that intertwines the collection, coding and analyses of the data with the decision on what data to collect next and where these data may be found (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Theoretical sampling, understood as the process of ‘seeking pertinent data to develop an emerging theory’ (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96), is linked to the researcher’s desire to create a substantive theory (Locke, 2001), and supports the practice of seeking the most appropriate data to develop a theory.

Grounded theory follows a staged process with respect to its application (Locke, 2001). During the first stage, conceptual categories are created within which the researcher is seeking to assign common meaning to multiple observations. This is done through naming – the development of abstract meaning for the observation; comparing – the constant process of comparing observations with other observations; and *memoing* – reflecting upon observations through the analysis process to refine categories, and to allow ‘thoughts, hunches and reactions to the data to literally write our way to naming what we perceive in the data’ (Locke, 2001, p. 51).

The second stage comprises the integration of categories. This process is less at the data level and more at the level of the category, its properties, and relationships among and between these categories (Charmaz, 2006). This process allows for the articulation of the differences and similarities between observations (Locke, 2001). In the third and final stages, the delimitation of theory as the researcher develops and solidifies the theoretical component of the framework developed in the previous stage, and begins to develop the *story* that describes the phenomena or situation (Locke, 2001). This stage would present itself as following *theoretical saturation* – the point at which additional data observations yield no new information (Locke, 2001, p. 53).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) note that the output from comparative analysis yields two types of theory, substantive and formal. Substantive theory refers to theory developed for empirical use; formal theory concerns itself with a more conceptual area of

inquiry. Substantive theory is parsimonious and is not used to explain phenomena ‘outside of the immediate field of study’ (Goulding, 2002, p. 46). Substantive theory, however, ‘may have important general implications and relevance, and become almost automatically a springboard or stepping stone to the development of a grounded formal theory’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 76).

Grounded theory is not without its critics. Critique varies, ranging from a caution to the use of the term *grounded theory* as a ‘rhetorical gloss or mantra rather than a statement of actual research practice’ (Clarke, 2007, p. 427), to more pragmatic issues such as sample size and potential lack of rigour around coding and categories (Chiovitti & Piran, 2003).

Grounded theory serves the current study in as much as it represents ‘the careful and systematic study of the relationship of the individual’s experience to society’ (Goulding, 2002, p. 41). The current study has made broad use of theoretical sampling in that, while data were collected from a distinct group of participants, they were selected in a purposive manner (Charmaz, 2006; Morse et al., 2009), based on the researcher’s assumptions regarding their ability to articulate different ways of experiencing learning on the Programme. In addition, the early stages of coding were faithful through to the creation of conceptual categories of observations, which in turn were used to inform the phenomenographic categories of descriptions and the outcome space.

3.3.3 Justification for the Methodology

The current study examines students’ experience of an experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education. In addressing the research questions, two methodological influences, phenomenography and grounded theory were used.

These methodologies form part of a constructivist/interpretivist paradigm, and were selected for the following reasons (see Eklund-Myrskog, 1998; Richardson, 1999; Roberts, 2003):

- A constructivist/interpretivist paradigm allows for greater closeness between the investigator/researcher and the phenomenon being investigated. This not only accommodated the researcher's involvement in the Programme under study, but also allowed for trust to develop between the researcher and the participants, and afforded greater knowledge and insights into their experience.
- Phenomenography provides a methodology that is highly suited to an investigation of the nature of the current study. Phenomenography is a second-order research methodology that examines the experiences of a phenomenon rather than the phenomenon itself. In the case of the current study it examined participants' experience of learning on the Programme rather than the Programme itself.
- Grounded theory provided rigour to the current study in terms of theoretical sampling and through the early stages of data analysis. Grounded theory likewise allowed theory to emerge from the data.
- Phenomenography and grounded theory have been used together in similar studies that have examined students' conceptions and experiences of learning.

3.4 Issues of Trustworthiness

In reporting the findings or outcome of the research process, the obvious questions to be asked concern why the research finding should be trusted, and what value these findings may have for the reader. Crotty (1998) suggests that scrutinising the process

by which the research has been conducted offers the only reasonable answer to these questions.

In further developing the theoretical basis for the current study, it is necessary to consider issues of validity, reliability and generalizability, or rather, in the naturalistic context, more appropriately, confirmability, dependability and transferability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These terms have been grouped together under the heading of *trustworthiness* (see for example Porter, 2007; Rolfe, 2006).

The positivist notions of validity, reliability and generalisability are well-researched and supported, especially within the realm of quantitative methods (Scott & Morrison, 2005). Educational research methods, while including qualitative and quantitative data, are likewise traditionally aligned to positivist descriptors of validity and reliability (Cohen et al., 2000). The applicability of these scientific measures to qualitative data and the naturalistic paradigm has been called into question by a number of researchers, theorists and writers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Scott & Morrison, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue for a framework based upon *rigour* as a more equitable measure of the research process – within both a positivist and a post-positivist paradigm. Central to rigour is credibility, which is established through confirmability, dependability and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.4.1 Rigour in the Naturalistic Paradigm

Notwithstanding the inappropriateness of the positivist paradigm's approach to answering questions of rigour – the questions “why should the findings be trusted and of what value are the findings?” still remain. These questions are as important to the social scientist as to the natural scientist. The area of trustworthiness is the point

of most frequent attack for the naturalistic researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and it is here that an argument for trustworthiness needs to be made.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer criteria for addressing the positivist ideals of validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity. These are credibility, consistency, applicability, and neutrality. These will be explored in turn.

Credibility refers to the internal validity of the study, and is a measure of truth-value. From a naturalistic standpoint, the representation of truth-value is intertwined with the multiplicity of reality associated with the constructivist paradigm. This multiple construction of the truth can be validated only through their reconstruction and subsequent approval by the constructors of multiple realities that are under study. These recreations of multiple realities, coupled with methods that suggest that findings will be found credible, are the tools available to the naturalistic researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Consistency replaces the positivist ideal of reliability or replicability. It responds to the question: “can the results be recreated under similar circumstances?” Reliability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, as with validity, relies upon naïve realism. Both the positivist and naturalistic traditions share the understanding that in spite of all best efforts, there will be some variability in subjects being studied – especially in the case of human subjects. The measure for the naturalistic inquirer is that of consistency and dependability. This strategy addresses instability in the research process, and changes in the phenomena being studied and the associated research design changes.

As was shown in a previous section, *applicability*, or external validity, is in a state of tension with reliability or internal validity. A study that is overly *reliable* may

compromise its external validity of generalisability. The naturalistic researcher approaches this problem of applicability through the mechanism of transferability. Transferability refers to the ability to transfer findings from one inquiry into the context of another (Erlandson et al., 1993). With regard to issues of transfer of knowledge gained from one study to another, the positivist researcher is mostly concerned with issues of sample of population. The naturalistic researcher examines the context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) go further to suggest that, in order 'to be sure (within some confidence limits) of one's inferences, one will need to know about both the sending and receiving contexts' (p.297). Thus, transferability is not possible from within the context of a single dimension.

With respect to *neutrality* in regard to the research process, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) objectivity is based upon naïve realism. It is the result of a distance between the inquirer and the inquired, which will then mean that the investigation is deemed to be free of bias. The test of objectivity is that more than one person observes the phenomenon; thus limiting the possibility of subjectivity. From the naturalistic paradigm, this can be understood as confirmability. This is further supported by the phenomenographic methodology that approaches the research process from the viewpoint of the collective programmatic experience (Bowden, 2000; Marton, 2000; Walsh, 2000).

3.4.2 Trustworthiness in the Current Study

The current study has addressed the issues of trustworthiness, as described above, in a number of ways.

The researcher has remained reflexive through the research process, 'reflecting critically on the self as researcher, [and] the human as instrument' (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2005b, p. 210). Self-reflexivity is a form of contextual validity, in which the researcher makes sense of a social reality through an awareness of ‘how social discourse and processes shape or mediate how we experience our selves and our environment ...’ (Saukko, 2005, p. 350).

The phenomenographic approach provides a number of methods that ensure trustworthiness of the data. Replicability is not addressed through the recreation of categories of description by another researcher, but rather through the ability of another research to ‘recognise the conceptions identified by the original researcher through the latter’s categories of description’ (Sandbergh, 1997, p. 131). The need to be reflexive is part of the phenomenographic process of data collection and analysis. These processes are interlinked, and the researcher, in determining the phenomenon that is central to the study, takes into account the ‘structure of the phenomenon against the background of the situation’ (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 129).

Trustworthiness in the context of grounded theory is labeled as credibility (Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2002; Locke, 2001). The interconnected process of data collection and analysis, not dissimilar from that of the phenomenographic tradition, results in the researcher developing a conceptual framework that is a reasonable representation of the area of study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that a researcher’s conviction that the analysis is representative of the data, and that it is structured into a systematic theory, is a mark of credibility. While this may be true for the current study, the application of grounded theory to the method of the current study allowed for a general application of theoretical sampling. This provided ‘comparison groups in order to extend the general applicability or analytic generalizability of the theory’ (Locke, 2001, p. 60). This was further supported by the application of the following strategies to ensure credibility (Chiovitti & Piran, 2003):

- Allowing the participants to play a role in guiding the inquiry process.
- Using participants' actual words in the subsequent theory and discussion.
- Articulating the researcher's personal views, insights and involvement.

Furthermore, it is suggested that judgments regarding research can only be aimed at the report that presents the research, rather than the research study itself. These can only be of an aesthetic nature rather than of an epistemological nature (Rolfe, 2006).

3.5 Chapter Summary

The current study, contextualised in a programme based on the assumptions of constructivist learning theory, finds greater commonality with the naturalistic paradigm than with the positivist paradigm. The naturalistic paradigm suggests a contextually bound research experience, where research is value-bound, interrelated, and explained through a multiplicity of factors.

The methodological influences for the current study have been drawn from phenomenography and grounded theory. Phenomenography is well suited to an educational environment, and lends support to a prior discussion on deep and surface approaches to learning. The nature of grounded theory as a methodology of discovery has guided the research, as its focus is on understanding the research in its social context.

This chapter addressed issues of trustworthiness. The traditional positivist concerns with validity, reliability and generalisability were responded to with examples from the naturalistic paradigm's attention to credibility, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Chapter 4 presents the research site, and the research method adopted for this study is outlined in Chapter 5.

4 Research Site

This chapter presents the research site for the current study, the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurship Development Programme (termed hereafter the “Programme”). The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation (termed hereafter the “Foundation”) was formed through the initiative of Allan Gray Limited, Orbis Investments Management Limited and Allan W.B. Gray. It operates as a Public Benefit Organisation, registered in South Africa. The mission of the Foundation is to promote prosperity through entrepreneurship in an integrated Southern Africa (Rosenthal, 2006).

This chapter details the background of the Foundation, including its primary purpose and vision. This is important to the current study, as this purpose and vision influenced the design and orientation of the Programme. The Foundation’s Entrepreneurship Development Programme is described, including the learning outcomes, approaches to learning, programme structure, and assessment strategy. The current study is focused on a single year of the Programme, and this year is described in greater detail, including the learning activities and assessment tasks.

4.1 Background to the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation

The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation was formed in 2005 through the agency of Allan W.B. Gray and two financial services organizations, Allan Gray Limited and Orbis Investments Management Ltd. The formation of the Foundation was partly in response to the South African Financial Sector Charter, which sought, among other things, to ‘make a significant contribution towards economic growth, development, empowerment and reduction of inequalities and poverty in [South African] society’ (FSCC, 2004, p. 5). The Financial Sector Charter was formed in response to the

Black Economic Empowerment Charter that sought to 'address the imbalance of power within the state and economy between the minority white population and the majority blacks' (Southall, 2006, p. 67).

The Foundation was formed against the backdrop of the founder's vision and purpose, which is as follows.

1. Conditions of poverty and unemployment which remain prevalent throughout South and Southern Africa pose a formidable challenge, and an impediment to the achievement of a better quality of life for all people within this sub-continent.
2. Experience gained and research undertaken in a number of countries, have led to the widely held belief that such adverse social and economic circumstances are most effectively addressed by facilitating and enabling entrepreneurship; in particular, through programmes which serve to promote and encourage the acquisition and practical application of relevant knowledge, experience and skills. (Rosenthal, 2006, p. 3).

It was also noted that while South African universities succeeded at educating graduates who in turn became job seekers, their tertiary institutions were less successful at developing an entrepreneurial mindset among its graduates who could create businesses and provide employment (Gray, 2007). The Foundation offered Fellows (recipients of the scholarship) a fully funded scholarship to university covering tuition, board, lodging and subsistence. Alongside the scholarship, Fellows participated in an entrepreneurial development programme. This Programme was driven by an innovative *learning by experience* education methodology (Farr, 2007) and was offered alongside the Fellows full-time undergraduate degree studies. The

Programme included a combination of modes of interaction, including a two-day orientation, Saturday morning learning sessions, quarterly lectures from business leaders, and a mid-year winter seminar.

The Foundation and its Programme should be seen within the context of education in South Africa in general. The state of education in South Africa remains a concern for Government, educators, parents and learners (Bloch, 2009). Issues related to reform policy, racial desegregation, social integration, curriculum integration and institutional culture across all levels of education from primary to tertiary continue to impact heavily on the experience of learning among most South Africans, and in many respects, the inequalities of the past continue (Christie, 1998; Fataar, 1997; Jansen, 1998, 2004; Lemon, 1995; Soudien & Sayed, 2004).

While the Foundation's dominant focus was on the development of entrepreneurial talent among students enrolled in tertiary education, a Scholars' Programme was developed in 2007 to address the issues raised above within the pre-tertiary education system.

4.2 Curriculum Framework

4.2.1 Purpose and Outcomes

Drawing from the vision of the founder, and the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor data available at the time, the Foundation was formed with the express purpose of 'promoting prosperity in an integrated South Africa by harnessing the transformational energy of entrepreneurship' (AGOF, 2006, p. 2). The Foundation adopted a long-term approach, and undertook to identify and work with individuals through their university and work career before they began an entrepreneurial

venture. The key overall outcomes of the Foundation's Programme as they pertain to the activities of entrepreneurial development, were as follows:

- Making university-level people more entrepreneurial in their professional and personal outlook on life; and
- Establishing university education as a preferred basis for developing entrepreneurial activity.

The overall outcomes were devolved to five specific outcomes, which also served as the basis upon which candidates were assessed prior to selection for the Programme, and the framework around which the Programme of learning was developed. The five specific outcomes are detailed below, along with the description of each.

- ***Intellectual imagination*** – an enquiring and active mind demonstrated by an established record of intellectual achievement. An ability to see the unseen, challenge the status quo and suggest that things could be done differently to create new opportunities.
- ***Personal initiative*** – a person who makes things happen and celebrates the satisfaction of bringing new things into being. Independent, proactive and self-starting. A person who is willing and able to make his/her own decisions.
- ***Spirit of selflessness*** – A weight of personality that comes from living a life personified by passion and integrity. A recognition that ultimate personal satisfaction comes from empowering oneself in order that one might be able to serve others.
- ***Courageous commitment*** – The courage and dedication to continue, realizing that applying consistent commitment has a way of overcoming.

- ***Achievement excellence*** – The ongoing pursuit of excellence with a tangible and specific focus on setting goals. A motivation to make a difference and leave a mark. To be bold, not looking back, but pressing forward in the pursuit of one's goals.

These specific outcomes were mapped against six specific competencies that were associated with developing an entrepreneurial mindset. The competencies are as follows:

1. In-depth, grounded knowledge about entrepreneurship and different models of entrepreneurship.
2. An ability to identify meaningful business opportunities, to convert these into implementable business plans, and to execute these plans successfully. Through these activities the students will show a strong sense of focus in planning and implementing of business strategies.
3. An understanding of the concept of innovation, an ability to think of different ways of doing things, and a corresponding willingness to try new approaches and strategies where appropriate.
4. Understanding of risk, an ability to quantify risks and assess what risks are worth taking, and a propensity to take risks where the risks can be justified.
5. Development of an entrepreneurial orientation consists of the following key attributes:
 - a. A pioneering spirit.
 - b. An entrepreneurial outlook in both professional and personal life.
 - c. Tenacity and determination to succeed.
 - d. Integrity, defined here as *doing what you say you will do*.
 - e. Accountability for personal and professional actions.

- f. An orientation that is proactive, achievement-oriented, and self-starting.
 - g. A learning orientation, reflected in an ability to learn from one's own mistakes and to learn from others as fast as possible, as well as a commitment to continuous self-improvement.
 - h. Ability to network successfully.
 - i. Capacity to cope effectively with stress.
 - j. Ability to connect business actions to personal passion and energy. As well as to generate new passions and energy in different business areas as a basis for securing work opportunities.
6. Detailed knowledge of, and ability to, apply financial and business management processes.

4.2.2 Approach to Learning

The Foundation articulated a learning approach for the Entrepreneurship Development Programme that sought to make it possible for the Fellow to achieve the purpose and outcomes of the Programme. The teaching and learning strategy acted as an underpinning structure; combinations of theories, and teaching methods and techniques that were used to bring about effective learning.

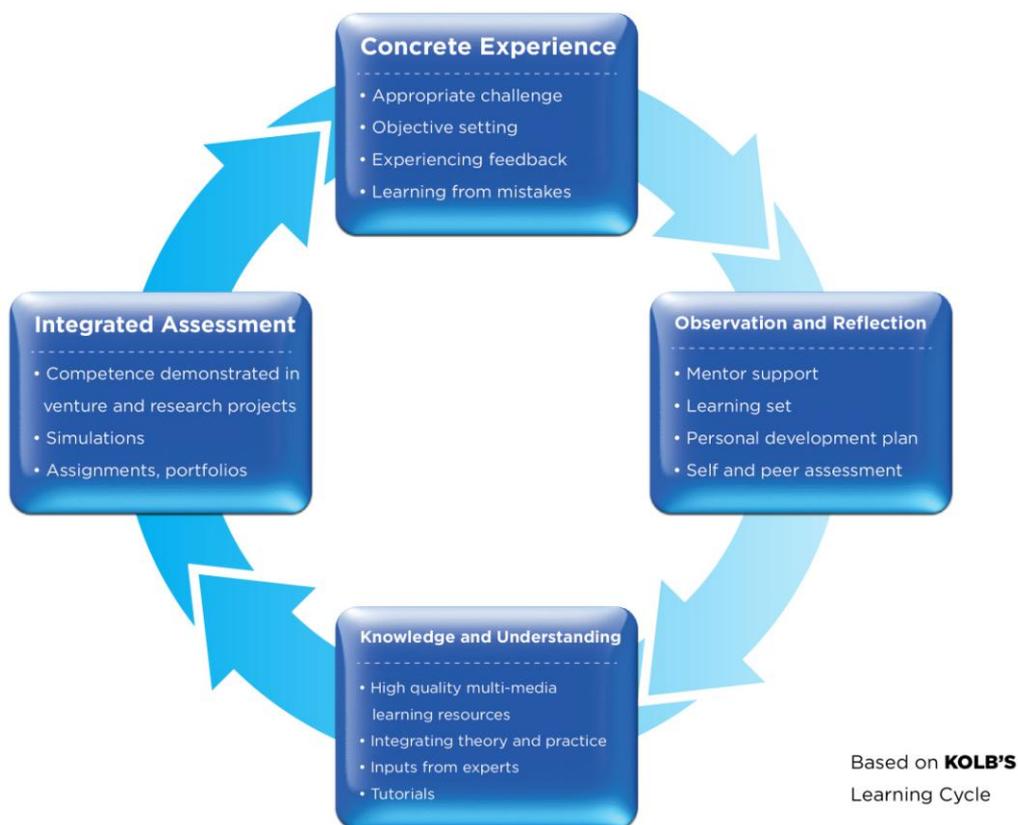
The Fellow and Facilitator Manual states the following with respect to the approach to learning.

The approach adopted in the programme is based on David Kolb's theory of experiential learning. Learning about entrepreneurship follows a similar process to Kolb's leaning cycle; from concrete experience to observation and reflection, which, through supported and self-directed learning, leads to understanding and

knowledge which is assessed both through competence in actual ventures and research projects, and assignments and portfolios. The teaching and learning and assessment methods emphasize the integration of reflection and practice and reality-based learning.(AGOF, 2006, p. 4)

This approach to learning, based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, is reflected in Figure 6, which is drawn from the Foundation's programme materials. As can be seen the model is very closely aligned to Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

Figure 7. Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Learning Cycle (source: Allan Gray Orbis Foundation)



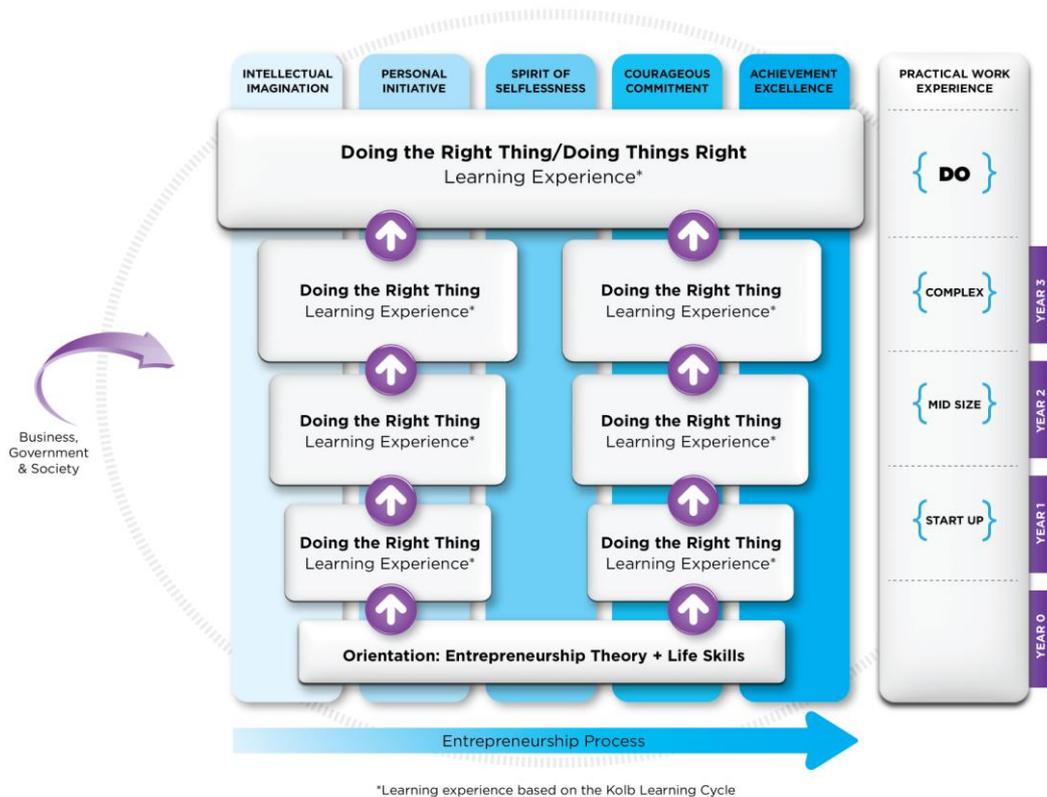
The approach to learning was connected to three core learning opportunities that in turn informed the actual learning activities. These learning opportunities are as follows:

- Fellows are introduced to a range of entrepreneurial skills and they are able to test a variety of techniques and tools in practical situations.
- The development of ICT skills must be a focus and Fellows will be encouraged to strengthen these skills throughout the Programme.
- Particularly in initial activities, purposeful and selective integration of learning skills are needed such as reading, identifying, and highlighting main points, comparing and contrasting positions, self-reflection, formulating arguments, presenting information using a variety of methods.

The learning approach was described as a learning spiral, in which Fellows would experience the entrepreneurial process (idea generation, idea validation, marketing & operational plans, and enterprise launch) in ever-increasing complexity over a four-year period. The intention behind this strategy was to develop confidence and skill over time through simulations, small, contained business ventures, internships, mentoring and involvement in different types of research projects.

The design of the Programme and the underlying learning activities was focused upon providing a practically grounded and theoretically enriched Programme, that focused on entrepreneurship and sought to make links between the Programme and the Fellow's undergraduate studies. Across the four years of the Programme, and based on the specific outcomes, a Programme structure was developed. This is depicted in Figure 7, which is drawn from the Foundation's Programme material (AGOF, 2006).

Figure 8. Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Curriculum Framework (source: Allan Gray Orbis Foundation)



The figure depicts a number of learning interventions that formed the core of the Foundation’s Programme, namely:

- ***Entrepreneurial simulations and activities*** (reflected in the centre of the diagram) - are activities that are created against the background of the five specific outcomes. These activities are divided into two broad categories. Firstly, doing the right thing, which refers to how to identify business opportunities and build a model to exploit those opportunities. Doing the right thing was concerned with effectiveness. Secondly, doing things right, which refers to how to execute on business opportunities by running a business efficiently.

- **Business Government & Society** (reflected on the left of the diagram) – these sessions were interactions with government officials, business people, economists, experienced entrepreneurs, and social entrepreneurs to provide context to session activities and learning.
- **Practical work experience** (reflected on the right of the diagram) – work experience activities were implemented in parallel with the entrepreneurial simulations and activities.

These three components of the Programme were depicted across the four years of the Programme in Table 3.

Table 3. Allan Gray Orbis Foundation programme structure (source: Allan Gray Orbis Foundation)

Year	Doing the right thing	Doing things right	Work Experience	Business, Government & Society
3	Business plan to a national/international business plan competition	Consulting in a simulated environment	Experience a complex large business	Interactions with government officials, business people, economists, experienced mentors, entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs to provide context to session activities.
2	Tour of a region exploring and finding business ideas – business planning	Running a services business	Experience a mid-size maturing business	
1	Explore entrepreneurial space for business ideas – feedback.	Running a retail business	Experience a small start-up business	
0	Observe different market spaces, collect data and reflect on learning			

4.2.3 Programme Structure

The Programme was delivered using a combination of modes and role players. Programme delivery times were varied to accommodate the demands of Fellow's undergraduate studies, and the variability across universities and provinces with respect to term and vacation dates.

Modes of Delivery

The Programme used the following modes of delivery:

- ***Facilitator-led sessions*** – Fellows were required to participate in facilitator-led sessions, which were held in each region and coordinated by a local facilitator. There were nine facilitator-led sessions over the year.
- ***Self-directed learning*** – through scaffolding and support materials, Fellows were encouraged to engage in self-directed learning through the Programme. This learning was mostly structured around the assessment tasks and the Fellow Guide that was provided to all Fellows at the start of each year.
- ***Mentors*** – Fellows were provided with a range of mentor experiences including peer mentoring, the provision of internal mentors (staff of the Foundation) and external mentors (external individuals who gave of their time and expertise).
- ***Work experience and internships*** – each year Fellows participated in work experience and internship placements, during which they were exposed to a range of organisations and business types. These included start-up businesses, large national companies, non-governmental organisations, and government business support agencies.

- ***Seminars and workshops*** - during the year Fellows were invited to participate in a number of seminars and workshops. These included Business, Government & Society sessions, and the flagship Winter Seminar during which Fellows spent three days living and learning together.

Role Players

The delivery of the Foundation's Programme was reliant upon a number of role players, both internal and external to the organization. These role players and their responsibilities are briefly described below:

- ***Fellows*** – the Fellows comprised the students on the Programme. They were responsible for developing themselves as self-directed learners, who played a pro-active role in their personal development as high-growth entrepreneurs.
- ***Programme Officers*** – Programme Officers were employees of the Foundation and were responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with the Fellows for the duration of the Programme, and to provide relevant and effective support, as required.
- ***Facilitators*** – Facilitators were a combination of Foundation employees (sometimes also fulfilling the role of Programme Officer) and external contractors. Their responsibility was to plan and facilitate regular learning sessions, seminars and workshops, during which the Fellows could share and discuss their experiences and difficulties, and engage critically around entrepreneurship topics.
- ***Mentors*** – Mentors were provided to Fellows throughout the Programme. These individuals included peer-mentors (senior Fellows), internal mentors (Foundation staff, usually Programme Officers), and external mentors. The

mentor's primary role was to provide a sounding board for Fellows and to give them the necessary support to grow and develop their entrepreneurial capabilities.

4.2.4 Assessment Strategy

While the Programme did not require that students write or pass tests or examinations, a number of assessment tasks were required that not only provided the scaffolding for learning on the Programme, but also provided a mechanism to assess progress through the Programme. Given that assessment was not linked to advancement, a clear strategy in this regard was required. The purpose of assessment on the Programme was to promote learning, for summative and attainment purposes, and as quality assurance. The Foundation's assessment strategy was informed by the quotation below that was provided to Fellows.

Assessment was structured along the Guidelines for Integrated Assessment provided by the South African Qualifications Authority. The approach to assessment on the Programme was provided as follows. "Integrated assessment at the level of qualification provides an opportunity for learners to show that they are able to integrate concepts, ideas and actions across unit standards to achieve competence that is grounded and coherent in relation to the purpose of the qualification.

Integrated assessment must judge the quality of the observable performance, but also the quality of the thinking that lies behind it. Assessment tools must encourage learners to give an account of the thinking and decision-making that underpin their demonstrated performance. Some assessment practices will be of a more practical nature while others will be of a more theoretical nature. The ratio

between action and interpretation is not fixed, but varies according to the type and level of qualification. A broad range of task-oriented and theoretical assessment tools may be used, with the distinction between practical knowledge and disciplinary knowledge maintained so that each takes its rightful place (AGOF, 2006, p. 11).

Assessment methods and instruments used on the Programme were guided by a number of principles, namely:

- Assessment is a key motivator of learning and an integral part of the teaching and learning process and plays a significant role in encouraging the development of specified entrepreneurial competence.
- Suitable formative and summative assessment tasks that ensure that all learning outcomes are validly assessed.
- Project-driven assessment will encourage an approach that integrates practice and theory.
- In line with the Programme's unique university focus, assessment should test the Fellows' ability to theorize and contribute to the body of knowledge about entrepreneurship in the South African context.
- A variety of assessment methods are used to ensure that key aspects of entrepreneurial development are developed.
- Less is more. As there are competing pressures on the Fellows, the challenge is to identify key assessment activities for each year.
- Assessment activities must show progression from year to year;
- Assessment activities must help Fellows to understand value creation and not be limited by shortsighted returns.

- Information and communication technologies are integrated in assessment tasks.
- Various people are involved in assessment: Fellows conduct self-assessment and peer assessment, facilitators, mentors and selected business people provide assessment reports on work experience.

The assessment principles were applied to the Programme, and three broad categories of assessment were developed, as follows:

- Yearly theme-based projects.
- Learning journal.
- Portfolio of evidence.

These are discussed in greater detail in the following section, when information pertaining to the single year of the Programme that was used for this study, is provided.

4.3 Programme Overview – Year One

Year One of the Foundation's Programme comprised the second year of the Programme (the first year being Year Zero). Fellows participating in Year One were all engaged in their second year of undergraduate studies. Not all Fellows who participated in the Year One Programme had previously participated in the Year Zero Programme, as the Foundation employed a multiple entry system in which Fellows could join the scholarship programme in either their first or second year of university.

The Year One Programme was themed as *On the Retail Runway*, in which Fellows participated in activities and assessment tasks that were focused on retail markets and businesses. Each activity is described below.

4.3.1 Programme Learning Activities

Safari

This was a three-day residential camp in which Fellows from different regions had an opportunity to meet each other in a relaxed, wilderness environment. This was important, as some Fellows would have joined the Foundation in the previous year and others joined in the current year. The outcomes of the Safari activity (Safari is the Swahili (an indigenous African language) word for journey) were to develop a sense of camaraderie among Fellows, to develop self-reliance and resilience through various challenges, outdoor activities, and to introduce activities and practices of self-awareness and self-reflection.

Orientation

Orientation occurred in the week prior to each Fellow's formal university orientation. During orientation, which lasted two days, Fellows were provided with all logistical and administrative information, and were formally inducted into the Foundation's scholarship programme. Fellows participated in a half-day activity that set the scene for their year of retail-focused entrepreneurial learning, and were handed their learning and support materials.

Discovery Sessions

The discovery sessions formed the heart of the learning on the Programme. There were nine discovery sessions through the year, each lasting approximately three hours. It was expected that, along with self-directed learning and completion of assessment tasks, Fellows would allocate 224 hours per year to the Programme.

The themes and outcomes of the nine discovery sessions were as follows:

- Session One – The Entrepreneurial Process: this session exposed Fellows to the high-level process that an entrepreneur would typically follow in creating a new business.
- Session Two – Basic Business Principles: in this session Fellows were exposed to some of the fundamental and critical principles that underlie a successful business.
- Session Three – Innovation & Lateral Thinking: this session focused upon exposing Fellows to the concept of innovation and the importance that innovation and creativity play in launching successful entrepreneurial ventures.
- Session Four – Risk & Uncertainty: in this session Fellows were introduced to risk and uncertainty, and the role these play in business planning.
- Session Five – Project Planning: this session focused on project planning and project management, and provided Fellows with some basic theory, and skills to develop a visual project plan.
- Session Six – Pricing, Marketing & Merchandising: this session discussed the concepts of pricing, marketing and merchandising, and examined the role that these factors play in creating and making meaningful business decisions.
- Session Seven – Negotiation Skills: in this session Fellows were introduced to negotiation skills and practices in order to support their retail business assessment task.
- Session Eight – Critical Thinking: in this session Fellows were introduced to the theory, skills and practice of critical thinking, so as to aid various analyses and evaluation tasks.

- Session Nine – Assessment Evaluation: in the final session, Fellows were required to present the outcome and process of their group assessment task. Time was also allocated for Fellows to present individual reflective tasks such as their journal and/or portfolio.

Winter Seminar

The Winter Seminar was a multi-day event held in each region during the June/July university vacation. Activities for Fellows were structured around a case study. The case study that was used for Year One Fellows was for a well-known South African fresh produce retailer. Fellows participated in group discussions, simulations, field trips, and assessment projects.

4.3.2 Assessment Tasks

Fellows were required to complete five assessment tasks through the year. Two tasks were for individual assessment and two tasks were for group assessment, and one task required both an individual and group component. The details of the tasks are as follows:

- Task 1 – Viable Business Ideas: Fellows worked in teams to identify and present a number of viable business opportunities in the retail environment. One of these opportunities would be selected for actual implementation.
- Task 2 – Interview with an Entrepreneur: Fellows worked alone, and met with and interviewed a successful entrepreneur. The task was aimed at preparing Fellows for the challenges of running their group retail business.
- Task 3 – Business Plan: Fellows worked in groups to develop and submit a simple business plan that would guide their implementation of their group business idea.

- Task 4 - Final Report & Presentation: Fellows worked alone and in groups to gather relevant information during their year that would illustrate and describe their journey and experiences while setting up their micro retail business.
- Task 5 – Personal Reflection: Fellows were required to keep a journal throughout the year, as well as develop a portfolio of that illustrated their personal learning journey. This was a form of progressive assessment, and while the journal and portfolio were read and assessed, the Fellow was required to comment on his/her own progress as part of the assessment process.

As far as possible, all Foundation learning activities occurred in an integrated manner, with support and encouragement for Fellows to make the connections between Programme learning, previous life experience, and their unfolding undergraduate studies. Learning activities for each year of the Programme were held at the same time and venue, and time was allocated for Fellows to interact across Programme years, this enhancing the learning experience.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the formation of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, and described the guiding purpose and objectives. The chapter further detailed how the high-level purpose was translated into programme activities across four years. A single year of the Programme, Year One, that formed the basis of the current study, was described in greater detail. The learning activities and assessment tasks for Year One were provided.

5 Research Method

Chapter 3 argued for a research methodology that is rooted in the constructionist paradigm and draws on a blend of phenomenography and grounded theory as the methodological framework. Whereas Chapter 3 created a framework for understanding the current study, this chapter addresses issues of method, that is, ‘... the tools and procedures we use for our enquiries’ (Cousin, 2009, p. 6).

This chapter begins by clarifying and detailing the involvement of the researcher with the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurship Development Programme. The chosen method for data collection was through focus group interviews, and this is described along with a brief discussion of literature pertinent to this data collection method. The manner in which focus group interview participants were selected is then discussed. The details of each focus group interview conducted over three years in each of three geographic regions is presented, and the data analysis procedure that was used, explained.

5.1 Positioning and Involvement of the Researcher

The involvement of the researcher with the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation started in late 2005 when the Foundation began preparing for its first intake of students for the Programme that would unfold from January 2006. At the time the researcher worked at the University of Cape Town’s Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the work with the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation was consistent with broader involvement with entrepreneurship teaching and education.

The researcher participated on the team tasked with designing a curriculum for the students. This entailed planning a framework for a multi-year programme, developed

around a number of entrepreneurial themes, as well as designing individual session activities, student support materials, and lesson plans. Involvement included facilitating a number of the learning sessions with Fellows, and training or supporting other facilitators, especially those working away from Cape Town.

The researcher's work with the Foundation continued during the period 2007 to 2010. During this time, the Entrepreneurial Development Programme had expanded to include three regions, seven universities, four years of programme activity, and a larger in-house facilitation team. The researcher played less of a role in learning session facilitation, and took on a greater role regarding curriculum design, facilitator training and support, and monitoring and evaluation.

It would be fair to say that the involvement of the researcher with the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation was more akin to involved participant than external observer. This closeness to the Foundation, the programme material and activities, and the students provided a familiarity with the day-to-day workings of the programme and allowed insight into the Foundation in a manner that would not have been possible had the researcher been an *outsider*.

Work with the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation ceased during 2010. This was an opportune ending, as involvement in the current study afforded a greater distance from the Programme, so as to provide the neutrality and reflective space necessary for analysing the data and writing up the study.

5.2 Data Collection

The method for data collection for the current study was through focus group interviews. This has support in the literature as an appropriate method for data collection for educational research (see Cohen et al., 2000; Kitzinger, 1994; Webb &

Kevern, 2001), and moreover was deemed the most expeditious, given the limited opportunities available within the Foundation's Entrepreneurship Development Programme to meet with Fellows as a group.

5.2.1 Appropriateness of Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews grew in popularity as a social science research method from their first reported use in 1941, moving from early roots in the political, military and market research sphere (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Scott & Morrison, 2005) to their now accepted function as a data collection method for answering a range of social questions (Calder, 1977; Eysenbach, 2002; Fallon, 2002). Focus group interviews differ from other group engagements, firstly, in that they are *focused* on a shared activity, idea or experience, and secondly, in that they address individual views *and* the nature of the interaction between the group members (Scott & Morrison, 2005). Focus group interviews are expedient from a researcher perspective, allowing for a greater number of participants in a single sitting, providing an environment and context that is conducive to discussion, allowing for the exploration of different ideas and perspectives, and exploring arguments to gain insight into individual and group thought processes (Goulding, 2002; Scott & Morrison, 2005). The advantage of focus group interviews as a research method has been highlighted by Kitzinger (1994) as the means to bring participant's attitudes, language, priorities and frames of reference into focus, and to facilitate a wide and varied set of conversations, identify group norms, gain understanding and insight into social processes, and encourage conversation around sensitive issues.

Given the context of the current study, and its use of aspects of phenomenography and grounded theory as research methodologies, and the focus on the domain of

entrepreneurship education, the current study drew support from relevant literature to illustrate the appropriateness of focus group interviews as the data collection method for the current study.

Focus group interviews have been used in a number of phenomenographic studies, three examples of which are described as follows. A study exploring students' conceptions of social research, using focus group interviews of ten participants, closely followed the phenomenographic tradition in terms of the questioning and analysis (Kawulich, Garner, & Wagner, 2009). In a study that examined the learning experiences of fashion design students, use was made of focus group interviews, predominantly as a function of research expediency and practicality (Drew, Bailey, & Shreeve, 2001). Another study, investigating the role of internationalisation on teaching and learning computer science, made use of focus group interviews as a secondary data collection method, illustrating the use of focus group interviews in support of or in conjunction with one-on-one interviews (Yang & Berglund, 2007). Focus group interviews have a long tradition within the grounded theory methodology, with a substantial number of studies across a wide spectrum of disciplines reporting the use of focus group interviews as the primary data collection method or alongside other methods. These include market research (Calder, 1977), research with students (Stewart, 2007), and medical research (Eysenbach, 2002).

Research into entrepreneurship education has often drawn on the constructionist paradigm and the methodologies mentioned earlier; it has likewise used focus group interviews as the primary data collection method, in some instances alongside interviews, surveys and other qualitative data collection techniques. These include development of a framework for entrepreneurship education teacher competency at a Phillipine university (Gatchalian, 2010), student experience of entrepreneurship

education at a Malaysian university (Samah & Omar, 2011), and community-based research into entrepreneurship development programmes (Fallon, 2002).

5.2.2 Selection of Focus Group Participants

The process of selection of focus group interview participants was made alongside an understanding of theoretical and purposive sampling, a technique that brings together groups of participants that share something in common, but are sufficiently diverse to meet the research aims (Charmaz, 2006; Cousin, 2009). The diversity and range of experiences of learning on the Programme was likewise a guiding factor in selecting focus group participants, as this was consistent with the phenomenographic approach (Bowden, 2000).

A number of practical considerations were also taken into account when selecting focus group participants.

Access was constrained to the Foundation's Fellow group by virtue of their geographical dispersion (in three of South Africa's provinces), and the fact that the Foundation's programme was a part-time activity for all the Fellows, who were busy with their respective university degree studies. There was a requirement to find an appropriate time to meet with groups of Fellows for between 60 and 90 minutes, at an appropriate venue, and at a time that allowed for their uninterrupted involvement in the focus group interview. A component of the Foundation's Programme activities was held during the mid-year break, and comprised a three-day residential programme (known as the Winter Seminar) run in each region in which the Foundation operated. The Winter Seminar proved to be the best environment for the focus-group interviews, as three successive years of Fellows from the Foundation's Programme (2nd, 3rd and 4th year) were in attendance. As the Foundation supported

the current study, time was scheduled over the three days during which the researcher was able to meet with participants.

Selection of participants for each focus group interview was made through consideration of whether the participants would be open to sharing experiences, articulating these experiences, able to conduct themselves in a group environment in such a way as not to dominate the group discourse, and willingness to participate. Furthermore, as all focus group interview participants were already involved in the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation's Entrepreneurship Development Programme, this acted as the homogeneous experience that brought them together. The Programme group was diverse in terms of gender, population group, course of degree study, and socio-economic background. The Allan Gray Orbis Foundation selects a broad, racially diverse and gender-representative group of Fellows. Most Fellows are financially dependent on the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation for a university scholarship. The primary factor of diversity was the university undergraduate course of study. This choice regarding diversity was aimed at addressing the desire not only to have a representative group of participants in the focus group interviews, but also to provide the broadest possible variability of experiences of learning on the Programme.

5.2.3 Focus Group – Practical Issues

The focus group interviews were conducted over three days with Fellows from each successive year of the programme (2nd, 3rd and 4th year) who were in attendance at the Winter Seminar. The researcher first met with the entire group, and explained the purpose of the research and what would be expected from Fellows should they agree to participate in a focus group. The researcher then approached each student who had

previously been identified through the process of purposive sampling, and asked whether they would be prepared to participate in the focus group. The aim was for a group of between 4 and 7 participants per group.

Participants gathered in a room that had been set aside for the purpose of the focus group interviews. The room was private and, where possible, away from any ambient noise. Participants sat around a conference table, which made it easier for group interaction, given that everyone had direct sight of each participant, and it allowed for a more relaxed environment.

All focus group interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The researcher again explained how the focus group would work and what its purpose was from a research perspective. Each focus group session began with a few simple questions to allow the participants to *warm up* and to provide a *voice print* that could be used by the transcriber.

A sample of questions asked at the focus group interviews is included as **Appendix B**. Questions were open-ended and aimed at allowing participants to share their stories with a particular focus on their experience of the Programme, without feeling that the overall purpose was one of individual, group or programme evaluation. The role of the researcher was to allow a conversation to emerge and flow between the participants, and for them to feel at ease and relaxed in the group setting. The researcher intervened when it was felt that conversation had drifted away from the experience of the Programme, or when a participant who had not spoken wished to do so at that point.

All focus group participants gave their informed consent to participate in the research. The purpose of the research, anonymity of participation, and the intended

use, dissemination and storage of focus group interview recordings and transcriptions was made clear to all participants. As the researcher may have been known to some of the focus group participants through other roles at the Foundation, it was made clear that the purpose of the focus groups was to collect data to be used for research purposes, and not as a personal evaluation or assessment of any of the participants.

After each focus group, the recording was transcribed verbatim, and this formed the record for the data analysis.

A total of 80 focus group participants were purposively selected to participate in the study over a three-year period. This was an appropriate decision and research strategy, as the study remained a shared experience of the same phenomenon (Marton, 1986).

It should be noted that with respect to focus group interviews in the Western Cape and Gauteng in 2008 and 2009, these interviews were run with a maximum of six participants at a time.

5.3 Data Analysis

In performing the data analysis, the researcher drew upon both grounded theory and phenomenographic methods. It was found that the grounded theory approach was of greatest value in the early stages of the data analysis, as the researcher tried to make sense of what emerged from the interviews as a substantial pool of data. In the first round of data analysis, 125 open nodes were identified; this was reduced to 38 open nodes in the second round of data analysis, and thereafter to the 8 dominant themes and categories of description in the third round of data analysis. This allowed themes to emerge, far too many to work with, but sufficient to guide the ongoing data analysis efforts. A discrete data set was selected, focused on the shared experience of

the phenomenon under review. The phenomenographic approach was then used to work towards dominant themes and categories of description. Described below in greater detail is the process of data analysis.

5.3.1 First Round Data Analysis

All focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed (see **Appendix B** for an example of a transcribed focus group interview). Apart from the actual interview, this provided the first chance to listen to, and read through, the entire focus group interview. During this process the researcher noted down themes that were being discussed by the participants while they had the experience of learning on the Programme. Once the recording and transcription was completed and checked, notes on emerging themes were captured as a mind map (see **Appendix D** for an example of a mind map from the first stage of the data collection process). This visual method was particularly useful, as it allowed for a single image of the emerging themes from each focus group interview to be created, the use of colour made it easier to track and highlight important issues, and the connection between themes could be simply represented.

5.3.2 Second Round Data Analysis

Once all the focus group interviews had been held and the recordings transcribed, eleven mind maps representing the themes that had emerged from each focus group were produced. Data was now pooled into a single pool of data (Andretta, 2007). At this stage the researcher began to use computer software for qualitative data analysis, in particular the software package *NVivo*. Working once again through each transcribed focus group interview, the data were sorted by focussing on the experience of learning on the Programme. The focus of the data analysis in the

second round was on cohorts of participants who had completed Year One of the Programme. This involved sixteen focus group interviews to form the data set. This focus provided crucial insight to the data analysis process, as it allowed for greater focus with respect to student experience on the Programme, rather than being distracted by the difference in experience between the respective programme years.

The work with *NVivo* yielded a number of dominant themes, and these were logically grouped as four themes for the current study. This led to a third round of data analysis to extract the qualitatively different ways in which learning was experienced by the participants on the Programme.

5.3.3 Third Round Data Analysis

Having now discerned four dominant themes that would guide the research, the researcher drew upon phenomenographic methodology to allow the qualitatively different ways in which learning on the Programme was experienced to emerge. This entailed examining each theme (now coding into *NVivo* – see **Appendix C** for an example of the *NVivo* coding) and developing categories of description. Phenomenographic methodology raises a caution at this point in the research process, as to whether the categories of description already exist in the data and emerge progressively through the analysis process, or whether the categories are imposed upon the data by the researcher (Ashworth & Lucas, 1998; Dall'Alba, 1996; Harris, 2008). This was true not only for the phenomenographic approach, but for the grounded theory methodology as well (Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2002). As focus group questioning had been sufficiently direct, again faithful to the phenomenographic approach, which suggests that 'some pre-determined ... leading prompts are required to focus the interview appropriately for the aims of the study in

question' (Walsh, 2000, p. 19). The categories of description emerged in a clear manner after a number of iterations of data analysis. The categories of description described the qualitatively different ways in which learning was experienced on the Programme. The analysis process did not force data into categories, or discard data that appeared not to fit an emerging category of description. Rather, the process allowed the categories to emerge as representative of the data, while considering that logical relationships were emerging that referred to the ways in which the data and categories related to one another.

The output of the third round of data analysis is represented by the Outcome Space in Chapter 6, which depicts the categories of description and the dominant themes, as well as their relationships to one another.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter described both the method used in the current study, and the personal involvement of the researcher with the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurship Development programme. Programme participants were selected to take part in focus group interviews held over a three-year period in three provinces of South Africa, and they were invited to share their experience of learning on the Programme. The transcripts from these focus group interviews were analysed through three successive rounds, and yielded four dominant themes and four categories of description. The method used for data collection and analysis was faithful to both the phenomenographic and grounded theory methodologies, using a framework of discovery to allow themes and categories to emerge from the data.

6 Research Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis undertaken in order to address the research questions. These questions seek, firstly, to understand the qualitatively different ways in which students experienced an experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education, and, secondly, to understand the ways in which this understanding of student's experience can inform the theoretical understanding of the Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) when applied to entrepreneurship education.

The findings discussed in this chapter are based upon participant responses from three years of focus group interviews with 80 students participating in the research. The analysis of the data yielded four dominant themes, with four associated categories of description. These categories of description represent the qualitatively different ways in which students experienced learning in the Programme.

The categories of description with their associated dominant themes can be described, from a phenomenographic perspective, as an outcome space. What follows is a presentation of the categories of description, and thereafter a brief description of the dominant themes that run through the categories.

6.1 Categories of Description

The data indicated four qualitatively different ways in which learning in the Programme was experienced. These are ranked (1 – 4) from the least sophisticated experience of learning on the Programme (1) to the most sophisticated (4). These categories of description are as described below.

An experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education is experienced as:

1. **Identification** and description of the learning experience.

2. **Connection** with the learning experience.
3. **Internalisation** of the learning experience.
4. **Action** or behaviour change flowing from the learning experience.

The list above, being hierarchical, suggests that each successive category includes the experience of the previous category. Experiencing learning in the Programme as Category Two – ‘*there is a connection with the learning experience*’, will include Category One – ‘*there is an identification and description of the learning experience*’. It should be noted that higher categories of description are not merely a sum of the lower categories, but are inclusive of the lower categories while marking a demonstrably different way in which learning in the Programme is experienced.

Each of the categories of description is described below.

6.1.1 Category One – Identification and Description of the Learning Experience

This category represents the least sophisticated experience of learning in the Programme, in which the participant is able only to identify and/or describe the phenomenon. It is illustrative or indicative of a very low level of engagement with the overall Programme and the particular learning experience. The identification and description shows no evidence of personal investment in the learning experience (for example, the description may be in the third person – “*they did ...*” or “*the facilitator had us do...*”). At best, one could describe the participant as being physically present at the learning experience, but there is little evidence to support engagement or involvement.

6.1.2 Category Two – Connection with the Learning Experience

This category illustrates how learning in the Programme is experienced not just as *an event* (as described in the previous category), but also as a *personal* experience,

evidenced through a connection between a Programme learning experience and some other prior learning experience. A description of a learning experience that forms part of this category may be a significant leap forward for those in the Programme, as they are being challenged to move beyond the transactional nature of most learning experiences, understood as learn and study, pass the examination, and receive credits, to one in which they seek personal connection with each learning experience.

6.1.3 Category Three – Internalisation of the Learning Experience

Flowing from the two previous categories, this category illustrates not only the identification and/or naming of the learning experience, and some attempt at connecting with the learning experience, but now shows how the learning experience is made personally meaningful through internalisation. The learning experience is either compared to some internal personal model of learning or is used to support or bolster a parallel but related learning experience. This category is illustrative of higher levels of Programme engagement and interaction.

6.1.4 Category Four – Action Flowing from the Learning Experience

This category represents the most sophisticated experience of learning in the Programme, inclusive of all prior categories, and represents a significant move in engagement with learning on the Programme. Notwithstanding the long-term nature of the Programme, and the expectation that behavioural changes would manifest over a longer period than a year, this category represents a more immediate outcome or *early win*, in which Programme engagement is quickly transferred into action or behaviour change.

What has been described above is a brief overview of each qualitatively different way in which learning in the Programme was experienced. These categories of description

are rooted in the Programme context and are structured by the four dominant themes directly linked to the experience of learning in the Programme.

6.2 Dominant Themes

As a way of understanding and contextualising the qualitatively different ways in which the learning on the Programme was experienced, the relationship between the categories of description can be understood through four dominant themes. The dominant themes emerged through an analysis of the data, which yielded a number of contextual areas of focus related to the qualitatively different ways in which learning in the Programme was experienced. The themes are thus a way of contextually understanding the current study (the experience of entrepreneurship education), and a means to expand upon the variation in the experience within an applied environment. The themes have emerged from the data, and are illustrative of the aspects of the Programme that participants use to describe their experiences of learning.

The four themes are as follows.

The experience of learning is described through:

1. The nature of the learning context and environment;
2. The nature of the interactions between participants, facilitators and other role players;
3. The nature of engagement by participants; and
4. The nature of reflective behaviour exhibited by the participants.

The themes are discussed further below.

6.2.1 The Nature of the Learning Context and Environment

This theme, the nature of the learning context and environment, refers to the ways in which Programme participants experienced learning on the Programme through the structure of the learning context and environment. In this theme, *environment* refers to the physical environment, and *context* refers to the learning context created as a result of the physical environment.

6.2.2 The Nature of the Interaction with Role Players

Facilitators, mentors and guest speakers played a role in framing and shaping the learning experience for participants. The Programme materials are limited in terms of their depth of content and theory, and the Programme activities are framed to give substance to the underlying lesson. This theme illustrates this important connection. The differences in experience illustrate a progression from simple instruction-based teaching, to a learning environment characterised as facilitated, to a mentored environment, and finally to a coached learning experience.

6.2.3 The Nature of Engagement by Participants

This theme describes the nature of engagement in the learning experience. The theme marks the move from an examination of external elements that impact on the experience of learning in the Programme (learning context and environment and role of facilitators, mentors and guest speakers), to an examination of the internal experience of learning in the Programme. Across this theme, the four categories of description show a progression from a simple identification that a learning experience has taken place, to an awareness of external learning stimuli, to an awareness of the interplay between external and internal learning stimuli, and finally to a heightened awareness of the learning experience.

6.2.4 The Nature of Reflective Behaviour Exhibited by the Participants

The final theme explores various ways in which participants experience and explain their reflective behaviour through the Programme. Through a number of assessment tasks and in-session activities, participants were required to reflect on their learning experiences as a mechanism to improving future learning and to gaining self-insight. The predominant mechanism for reflective activity is a learning journal.

Participant experiences of reflective behaviour range across a continuum. At the lowest level, the participant exhibits no reflection or understanding of the role or mechanism of reflection. At the next level, participants show a surface approach to learning and reflection. The following level illustrates a deep approach to learning and reflection, manifested by reflection as an active process. The final level of reflection illustrates the completion of the experiential learning cycle in such a manner as to give clues to modified future behaviour (action).

6.3 Outcome Space

To better understand the interrelationship between the categories of description and the dominant themes, a tabularised outcome space can be created.

In Table 4, the categories of description are represented on the horizontal axis and the dominant themes on the vertical axis.

Table 4. Outcome space reflecting categories of description and dominant themes

	Identification of the learning experience	Connection with the learning experience	Internalisation of the learning experience	Action flowing from the learning experience
The nature of the learning context and environment	The nature of the learning context is formal and highly structured.	The nature of the learning context is participatory.	The nature of the learning context is one of discovery and exploration.	The nature of the learning context is that of challenge and co-construction.
The nature of interactions between participants, facilitators and other role players	The nature of the interaction is characterised by instruction.	The nature of the interaction is one of participating in a facilitated learning experience.	The nature of the interaction is one of being mentored.	The nature of the interaction is one of being coached towards and through a learning experience.
The nature of engagement by participants	The nature of engagement could be described as being physically present and attentive.	The nature of engagement is characterised by being aware of external learning stimuli.	The nature of engagement is characterised by being aware of external and internal learning stimuli.	The nature of engagement is characterised by being fully mindful of the experience, as well as internal and external learning stimuli.
The nature of reflective behaviour exhibited by the participants	There is no overt reflective behaviour exhibited.	Reflective behaviour is superficial and 'surface' orientated.	Reflective behaviours are exhibited as an active process of reflection on the learning experience.	The reflective behaviour is comprehensive and orientated to a deep approach to learning.

From the Table above it is clear that there are sixteen descriptions that help to describe the variation in the experience of learning in the programme. The relationship between a category of description and a dominant theme has been labeled as a *thematic relationship*. These relationships are described in the following section from the perspective of the category of description.

6.4 Categories of Description

What follows is a description of the sixteen thematic relationships, representing the ways in which learning in the Programme is experienced. The narrative outlined below is driven from the perspective of each of the categories of description, which are explained and contextualised through each of the respective themes. In each case,

one or more quotations is provided as an example of what could constitute a response that forms part of the relationship between category and theme. Indicated in bold type are words or phrases in each quotation that exemplify the respective thematic relationship.

6.4.1 Category One – Identification and Description of the Learning Experience

This category represents the lowest level of the experience of learning in the Programme, and is characterised by a simple identification and/or description of the learning experience.

Learning Context and Environment

The thematic relationship between the learning context and environment and Category One is structured and formal. It is identified by a physical environment that feels and is experienced much like a classroom – arranged with an instructor providing information to an audience of learners. The experience of this learning context and environment is didactic. This may be necessary with regard to certain knowledge types – important or basic rules that need to be known or learned in order to move forward. However, within the context of experiential learning, this mode does not fully engage participants in the learning process, and encourages memorisation and rote learning, associated with a surface approach to learning.

The quotation below illustrates a lack of understanding or recognition of the difference in the learning environment between that experienced at university and at school, and the more participatory nature of the Programme learning experiences.

'It feels like the sessions we're having makes a person feel like school in a way. It's supposed to be you learn what you want to learn and you absorb as much as you want to absorb so when you're bringing things like content or whatever.'

Observation of the learning context and environment is often manifest through comparison with university or school learning experiences. The quotation below is illustrative of this comparison.

'I personally like the way the content is presented **because usually we're sitting in like lecture-type environments where the lecture is a good hour so ...** by the time you come out thinking, oh my gosh that was boring... So it's kind of nice because **the sessions are short and they just get straight to the point and you're not doing it for like endless hours** learning one thing and it's just not like theory thrown at you all the time. You actually **discuss what you're learning while learning it so it makes it more fun** and the fact that you're even acting makes it fun as well.'

Not every experience of the learning environment was felt to be so different from university or school. In some instances, the experience was linked to the facilitator or instructor, and the way in which they brought the material alive within the learning environment. This was also linked to perceptions regarding how to learn entrepreneurship.

Role Player Interactions

The thematic relationship between the role-player interactions and that of Category One describes interaction with facilitators, mentors, and other role players as one characterised by instruction. What is clear is that engagement with role players can occur in a simple manner, often taking events and activities at face value rather than seeking a deeper experience. The quotation below illustrates how the Business, Government and Society sessions are experienced mostly as a networking event, possibly missing the deeper message from the guest speaker.

'I think the BGS sessions for me; **I think it's a great networking opportunity.** Especially when it comes to the society and government aspects because so often a lot of business people might not, they might get very involved in the private sector but they might not get involved with people from government or society.'

In the quotation below, the *message* of taking risks, as described by a guest speaker from an Internet services company, is received in an almost naïve manner, with little regard to the organisational culture and process that may allow the CEO to take on certain risks.

'... When he said that he takes all risk as long as he won't die so as a future entrepreneur in those years **when I'm faced with such a situation as long as I know I won't die I will take the risk** and I will remember that you know so, so the education for me is important.'

This thematic relationship is typified by a surface approach to learning, both from the role player and from the participant.

There may be something seductive about the engagement with future entrepreneurial opportunities that encourages a certain degree of carelessness. The quotation below is illustrative of this seductiveness and illustrates how the importance of university study is questioned.

'I think we also had a speaker at my work experience and I mean these two guys that are really young but have started like their own company and although it may not be a success now because it's just opened, like **it just shows you how there are so many opportunities available and you don't have to wait until you finish a degree to do it.** You don't have to wait until you're older, 'til you've got all the money. There's ways to do things now and that sort of just allows me to see that now while I'm young.'

This thematic relationship illustrates superficiality in the learning experience and to the interactions with facilitators, mentors, and other role players.

Engagement by Participants

The thematic relationship between engagement by participants and Category One represents the lowest level of engagement with the learning experience. The physical presence of the participant and a simple identification and naming of the activity and/or activities typifies this relationship. This level of engagement may be similar to much of the participant's prior learning experiences, when mere attendance was an indication of engagement.

The quotation below illustrates this limited engagement with the Programme. The quote illustrates a description of the three core activities of the Foundation's Programme – the contact sessions, guest speaker (BGS) sessions, and the Winter Seminar.

'A lot of what we have touched on in the **contact sessions** you hear a lot of that from the people who come and speak at the **BGS sessions** and then like in the **Winter Seminar** with the trips ... we got to see what we've learnt in action and in terms of a learning experience, first you read or study something and then you hear it and then you see it that's probably equipped you with all the tools you need to complete the learning experience which should be for you to do it yourself, you've gone through various learning processes where you've learnt from people in the know what works what doesn't ...'

Examining the above quotation a little more closely, there is little to indicate that this exemplar is representative of engagement through the learning experience. The simplistic approach described above – "*first you read or study something and then you hear it and then you see it*" – illustrates a low-level understanding of the

Programme structure. Being prepared for the learning experience is clearly important. However, the quotation provides clues to a basic approach to preparation of the required material only as the basis for full participation.

'I think like I said in the beginning that, you know, **you should be reading your case studies and whatever's in your folder before you come to your sessions** so you can be, you know, you can know what's going to be spoken about so that you can enjoy the session more and, you know, you can take part in the discussion.'

The experience above is amplified by a shared concern about the absence of a formal textbook to guide the learning experience. The Programme design specifically avoids the use of textbooks to support the notion that learning occurs through discovery and exploration, and that no defined and agreed sets of rules exist to guide participants towards entrepreneurship.

'**I just kind of I wish there was like a text book** or something like some work I could use like handouts and, because the way we learn now is very refreshing and it's interesting as well with the case studies and the group discussions and stuff but it **seems a lot like almost like the outcomes-based education** where we're learning ...'

The reference to outcomes-based education is a clear reference to the South African school environment. This may, along with the quotation below, indicate a certain conditioning that has occurred through primary and secondary education that demands that a learning experience has certain elements (classroom environment, teacher, textbook, and formal assessment) for it to qualify as a valuable learning experience.

'I don't know, call me, I'm very old school in that give me a text book and give me an exam as well. You know what I mean? Like, I'd be keen for lectures and notes and ...'

The quotation above suggests that there may be some discomfort with the style of learning around which the Programme has been created. The desire for formal assessment, a prescribed text, and a focus on *doing homework* seems to reflect a degree of conditioning in formative educational environments.

Reflective Behaviour

This thematic relationship, consistent with Category One and the theme of reflective behaviour, is characterised by the absence of any obvious or meaningful reflective practice. There is recall of the learning event, but no meaning-making from the experience, and no indication of how the experience could be used to inform future learning.

An element of naïve *wonder*, with respect to the Programme material and activities, characterises this thematic relationship. There seems to be a sense of awe of the fact that there is a theoretical and educational base to the field of business and entrepreneurship that forms the intellectual base for the Programme.

'To start a retail company you think distribution, logistics, how do you expand, you know? There's a lot behind the scenes to the actual, well let's put it this way, **there's a business concept and then there's the business that has to be run** and I think that Allan Gray is really, the programme has shown me a lot about **there's a whole facet of business behind the business concept** and I've, that's what I'm most fascinated in, how different business concepts use different business models to make that viable ...'

The quotation above provides an example of this naïve wonder; it illustrates a sense of awakening to the idea that businesses need more than a conceptual frame to be successful. This link would have been made clear in the Programme sessions, and the early reference to some of the aspect of business management “... *think distribution, logistics, how do you expand*”, seems to support the idea that what is being exhibited in this quotation is a passive regurgitation of session material rather than an internalisation of the deeper lessons in the Programme activities.

A further example of this is illustrated in how Programme learning is compared to university learning, or to activities that are peripheral to the Programme. The quotation that follows describes this comparison.

‘Funnily enough, when I was doing my work experience at the National Empowerment Fund which focuses on funding small start-up companies and large corporate transactions, **I found that I used quite a bit of my work from the initial Allan Gray camp and this year’s folder**. A lot of the processes that they go through about thinking about business - What’s the size of the market? Who ... is the target market? What are they selling? What’s their unique selling point? All of that information actually did come up from that work we had already done, so **I found that quite useful and quite enlightening in terms of how do you evaluate an investment or potential business idea?**’

The above quotation illustrates a connection with the Programme material; the reference to the Foundation Selection Camp (initial Programme selection camp) and to the *folder* that is provided as a guide to the session, and Programme learning outcomes, activities and assessment tasks. Given the limited intellectual value of the supplied materials (they are provided as support materials and as a guide for session discussions), the reference back to this material as a link into the investment decisions of the National Empowerment Fund (a State-owned venture and equity

capital firm) should be called into question. What would appear to be lacking from the above quotation is an internalisation of the Programme activities that would, in turn, indicate that the learning was not just for its own sake or for future reference, but rather as a means to shaping the thinking and actions for future entrepreneurial activity.

6.4.2 Category Two – Connection with the Learning Experience

This category represents the second level of the experience of learning on the Programme, characterised by a connection with the learning experience.

Learning Context and Environment

This thematic relationship between Category Two and the learning context and environment can be described as a participatory learning context and environment that encourages and supports the making of connections with the learning experience. This could be manifest in the physical environment (layout of the room), the manner and style of the facilitator, or the inclusion of activities and guest speakers. In most instances, participant responses that illustrated this category were focused on the Business, Government and Society events.

‘... with the BGS sessions then we not actually doing anything practically but we do get to see people that have made it in entrepreneurship and we get inspiration and motivation and **we can actually ask advice and hear how different people have made it** and what they have done and you know different people have different methods and then, **then we do go to practise as well with our own projects ...**’

The above quotation illustrates the nature of the relationship between Category Two and the learning context and environment, where the participant is able to make a

connection between the various activities within the broader context of the learning experience. The following quotation further illustrates this connection.

'In terms of the BGS session, I think it has contributed I don't know, significantly to me and to my understanding of entrepreneurship because like it is from what I'm, **from my own observation it has been related [to] the content or rather the material I used in the sessions ...**'

The four-day long Winter Seminar was mentioned as another time where the link or connection between theory and practice is made. This event is constructed to make the connecting that much easier, given its residential nature (participants learn and live together for the four days) and its focus around a single business case study. In the quotation below, the value of reading the case study and participating in the seminar is made clear; the response illustrates the motivational nature of contextually sensitive case studies.

'For me at the moment my highlight for the Winter Seminar is actually reading the case study of Fruit and Veg City [a local retail business]. It was fantastic that's when I actually thought, hang on why doesn't the Foundation actually [do this] each and every month. If we can have a case study of all the successful business[es] and then learn about them, I mean this is so fascinating. **I mean there are things that you learn from a case study it ... make you just to actually believe in the spirit of entrepreneurship,** that you actually can be able to make it. Like when I read the [Fruit and Veg City] case study and I actually realised how many times they have failed and they actually all of a sudden now they are all successful ... **that's an experience and that's also an education for me as a future entrepreneur, that you know ... no matter how many times you fail you still have to go on and keep on believing in your idea ...**'

The nature of most university-based learning is transmission through individual courses or subjects, each bearing credit, and thereby focusing the student on passing the subject rather than on making the connection between one subject or course and another. The nature of the Programme, and the essence of entrepreneurship, requires a high degree of connection and integration between subject areas. The quotation below contrasts the Programme structure and its *structured connectedness* with the lack of connection in university-based learning.

'I know for me it's after I've done a module and I'm going to the exam I'm like cool, that's over. Okay, out the window. Now let's look forward (to) the next and it's not connected to anything else. I might not use it ever again, you know, but that's not usually what the programme is about. It's [kind of] what we would use together and also a facility where they just combine, we come back and we use it to create something better.'

Thus, the connection exemplified in this thematic relationship comprises both the connections made within the Programme material, and the connections made between Programme activities and events.

Role Player Interactions

In the thematic relationship between role player interactions and Category Two, experience of learning in the Programme is perceived as part of a facilitated process. The external role players seek to fill the role of learning facilitator, encouraging and helping the engagement with the learning material and creating an environment of discovery. The quotation below reflects some of the frustration that is experienced related to the emphasis on self-directed learning. The quotation also speaks to the role of the facilitator (referred to as the Programme Officer) in creating relevance around

the Programme content and in bringing their experiences into the learning environment.

'I've found the content relevant, although at the time it wasn't apparent sometimes and not all the time, often and from **experience shared by the Programme Officer has helped** in the contact sessions to make it relevant to an [entrepreneur].'

The quotation below adds weight to the important role that the facilitator plays in bringing the Programme material alive. What is worth noting is that it is not the explanation of content or material that is valued, as much as the sharing of personal experiences that creates a connected and facilitated learning environment.

'So ja, for me to get from the theory to the practice, sometimes is a bit of a leap, but I find that the experiences shared by the Programme Officers does help to bridge that gap.'

An element of this thematic relationship is shared learning among Programme participants. The short quotation below shows a clear understanding of this mode of learning.

'We chat and we do and we already gain from each other about that.'

The quotation above provides important clues about the interplay between activity and discussion and how learning emerges from that process. This way of learning is not universally valued. The quotation that follows highlights a perceived weakness in the Programme learning methodology with respect to inter-participant learning.

'In that sense, though, that's one thing that I think is also slightly a weakness in the material is that a lot of that material is asking us to drive a conversation and

while I concur completely like I've learnt such fantastic things from so many people,
I think the majority of people here haven't had major business experience.'

Thus, a key weakness in the Programme learning style is the reliance on inter-participant discussion to drive learning – given the relative entrepreneurial inexperience of most participants, the role of the facilitator is crucial to the meaning-making process, if only through the sharing of the facilitator's life and business experience.

Engagement by Participants

The thematic relationship between engagement by participants and Category Two describes a mode of engagement that is illustrative of a heightened awareness of the deeper lesson or message in the learning experience. The mode of engagement does not illustrate an internalisation of the experience of learning; that is depicted within the next category of description.

Case study-based learning forms a part of the Programme, and for most participants, this is their first engagement with a business case study. The case study provides both an example of an entrepreneurial venture, and a point of discussion for a range of aspects of business formation and management. The case is rarely if ever used as an exemplar of best practice. The two quotations below illustrate a general enjoyment of case-based learning. However, there is no suggested caution in the responses as to the broad and future applicability of the cases.

'Okay, I'm maybe the only one that feels this way but I don't feel that people find it that case studies like, you know, this is like studying for myself but I personally enjoy it because **I want to know more about, you know, South African businesses today and how they are run like what is the marketplace today?'**

'Sometimes we can also derive the lessons from the story itself from the case in, okay, these are the five steps to entrepreneurship, blah, blah, blah. But if you read the story and can see for yourself, okay this was a difference, when this happened they differed and I don't better in that way from actual life, you know stories, the thing that happened ...'

The second quotation clearly shows how there is movement from the first category of description (identification) – *“these are the five steps to entrepreneurship”*, to the second category of description (connection) – *“... read the story and can see for yourself, okay this was a difference, when this happened they differed”*, but has not stretched the engagement to an internalisation of the actual experience. Internalisation is understood as a process that leads to a deep approach to learning.

In contrast with the previous category of description, this category reflects a differing view with regard to the role of textbooks.

'It [the session materials] seems to me more like a guideline than anything else. That book sets out what you're supposed to do and the outcomes and what you're supposed to talk about. The bare minimum and then you go to a section and then fill, and then [you] fill [in] the content so you can't learn from that thing ...'

The above quotation illustrates two issues, firstly, a (correct) recognition of the role of Programme material with regard to outcomes and the basis for session discussion; and secondly, some hints at the transactional nature of engagement – *“The bare minimum ... and then [you] fill [in] the content so you can't learn from that thing”*. The requirement to do *“the bare minimum”* to remain a part of the Programme and retain the valuable scholarship, and the slip of *“you can't learn from that thing”* is possibly suggesting an appreciation for the Programme material (in lieu of a

textbook), while at the same time experiencing disappointment at the lack of learning directly from the materials provided.

The quotation below makes some contrasting observations with respect to university education, and makes a case for the non-inclusion of a formal text for the Programme.

'You don't get that opportunity to maybe challenge the lecturer or ask questions or have a discussion where you get different views from different people. The only thing you get is the textbook and what the lecturer is saying so for some of us ... for me personally I like discussing the work because I'm part of what's going on. **I mean I get to grips [with] my input is always receiving all the time and just trying to store this information I actually get to participate so text books for me would totally kill the experience.'**

The final line of the quotation would seem to imply that university-based learning is about receiving and that the predominant activity is that of information storage. The participation in the Programme is, while not in itself reflected upon, seen as a preferable mode of engagement.

The thematic relationship between Category Two and the theme of engagement by participants has illustrated a level of engagement characterised by increased awareness of a learning stimulus (or event), but this awareness has not resulted in a shift in internal understanding, attitude or behaviour.

Reflective Behaviour

The thematic relationship represented by Category Two and the theme of reflective behaviour describes activities that, while reflective, are representative of a surface approach to learning. These examples of reflective behaviour move further than the

previous category of description in that they exhibit some reflective practice; the key differentiator is that the practice lacks any depth of analysis.

The quotation below illustrates the important distinction between identification of and connection within the context of reflective behaviour. The quotation refers to the role of Programme learning within the constraints of personal life.

'The way you think of things, like when you walk into a store now, you look at like when we went into Fruit and Veg [City], **we'll definitely think about how things operate differently now** and that entrepreneurial mindset from our background of what we've done at the Foundation and the content in our file, so I think, like for example, when I walked into a chicken store, like you know, Sizzlers there at Wits and **I like picked up certain things as an entrepreneur that are not working, why they're losing customers, it could be because of the competition.** So I think that helps, you know, applying it to our own businesses when you start walking to other businesses and start picking up the problems and the advantages of what they plan.'

The above quotation is a promising example of how reflective practice is used to engage with the Programme and make sense from activities and learning in a meaningful way. The connection from the Programme materials (*content in our file*) to case studies and field trips (*when we went into Fruit and Veg [City]*) to some recognition of the relevance of this work in the world outside the Programme (*like for example, when I walked into a chicken store*) all seem to point towards an insightful and valuable learning experience. It is also interesting to note that the quotation gives clues towards the internalisation of *being an entrepreneur* (*I like picked up certain things as an entrepreneur that are not working*) and is, albeit serendipitously, reflective of an opportunity-seeking mindset.

Some of the reflection within this thematic relationship relates to a reflection, not of learning from the experience, but from the content that drives the learning experience. The two quotations below illustrate this form of reflection. The first shows a reliance on the facilitator (in this case a Programme Officer) to assist in making sense of the Programme content. The second stands as the ideal example of reflective practice typified by this category of description.

'the Programme Officer has helped in [the] contact sessions to make it relevant to [entrepreneurship].'

'So like the content of the like foundation it has deepened my understanding besides that **it's not about making money**, but it's about a whole lot of things, personally you learn how to behave as a person and you learn how to behave around a group and you learn how to be a leader yourself in a group.'

The first quotation may indicate a lack of effort to make sense of Programme material and activities, rather than an indication of the apparent lack of relevance of content.

The second quotation is an example of reflective behaviour that represents a surface approach to learning. Much of the content of the response is contained within the Programme outcomes, session outcomes, and overall ethos of the Programme. It is a valuable response, as it indicates identification with second-order learning objectives.

The early reference to money (*it's not about making money*) is of interest – the Programme does advocate commercial entrepreneurialism (profit-generating activities). However, it is not only about generating profit or *making money*, but about building an aptitude and ability for entrepreneurial behaviour.

A further example of reflective behaviour within this thematic relationship is characterised through what would appear to be a valuable learning experience, but where the reflection does not stretch beyond the obvious message.

'I actually realise in ourselves after the first BGS session because when you watch that video of that lady ... **I was totally like absorbed in watching this thing because it was real and she was living it and she was giving practical, "this is what I did, my business is doing this right now" and for me I was learning. I was learning how to pick it up.** You know, I'm not saying it has to be, I think again it comes back to content or being your necessarily your facts and whatnot but just those lessons coming through from that practical experience of other people.'

The above quotation illustrates value of such events (*I was totally like absorbed in watching this thing because it was real and she was living it ... just those lessons coming through from that practical experience of other people*). However, there is no clear sense that the guest speaker's message has been understood within its context, or of the circumstances within which these experiences may have taken place. The quotation seems to suggest that because a guest speaker dealt with a situation or event in a particular way, this is the best or only method for dealing with similar situations in the future.

This thematic relationship has illustrated an increase in the reflective behaviour of the experience of learning in the Programme. In contrast with the previous category of description, there has been some attempt to make sense of learning and to reflect on each experience. However, this has not been extended into the world in a way that would suggest a deepened learning experience. The category of description that follows provides examples of how Programme experience is manifest in a manner that is consistent with a deep approach to learning and a deeper level of reflection.

6.4.3 Category Three – Internalisation of the Learning Experience

Category Three represents the third level of experience of learning in the Programme. It is characterised by an internalisation of the learning experience. Internalisation is understood as a cognitive process that leads to a deep approach to learning.

Learning Context and Environment

The thematic relationship between the learning context and environment and Category Three describes a learning situation that is characterised by discovery and exploration. The context and environment is highly conducive to taking ownership of the learning experience; an internalisation of the learning experience that is illustrative of a high degree of self-directed learning.

The quotation below illustrates this sense of discovery.

'So when you figure things out for yourself you learn more about them. That's why I like the way things are structured because it gives you a [inaudible] and through figuring them out for yourself there's kind of room to expand ...'

In some instances the “discovery” is generated through the assessment tasks that form a part of the Programme. The assessment tasks act as the trigger for the learning experience and provide a healthy sense of competition.

'I think the assessment tasks is what helps us the most, because it feels like you're learning through your experiences ... **with our assessment tasks, when we get down to it, we know that we have something to complete and working towards a goal.'**

Not all Programme experience is consistent with the sense of responsibility and personal ownership that is associated with a more discovery-based style of learning.

School and university conditioning may explain a shared concern regarding self-directed learning.

'That section, like skim over it and say that, you cover it in your own time so I find that that can be a bit of a problem especially when you try to get to grips with the content because **it's fine that you might not go so in depth in class but if you're outside of class and not so sure should I actually go in depth by myself or should I leave it or what should I do with it?**'

'And you know **what you've learned but you can't recall because it's not documented, you can't go back to it, and I hope, just put it this way, at the end of the year if we had to write an exam on this I don't think very many people ... would pass** sorry, and I don't think it's because we weren't taught badly or anything but because there was very little, like we were taught how to think and that kind of thing and how to change your thinking ...'

The two quotations cited above illustrate some of the concerns regarding high degrees of self-determination for the learning experience, and some of the perceived advantages in being allowed to discover and explore without the threat of examination, but within the structure of being assessed.

Role Player Interactions

The subtle distinction between the role player interactions as they pertain to Category Three, as opposed to those discussed under the previous category of description, is that the role player interaction is less direct. This thematic relationship is characterised within the context of the Programme by a deeper appreciation of the *message* of guest speakers. As discussed earlier, there is an identification of an important business or life message from a guest speaker. However, the distinction in

this theme is that the message is understood and internalised in a way that typifies a deep approach to learning.

The quotation below, once again drawing on the guest speaker session with the CEO of an Internet services company and his discussion on risk, shows, firstly, an immediate understanding of the link between the Programme content and the guest speaker's comments (the first part of the response), but also shows a deeper understanding of the message of risk to personal circumstances with respect to the illusion of security in formal employment. The quotation is thus illustrative of a surface approach to learning, with an element of internalisation of the *message* and some clues as to how future behaviour may be modified based on this learning experience.

'I think specifically just with regard to when that BGS we were dealing with risk, you know, one had gone through the session with regards to risk and uncertainty, but with the BGS it was, **you were hearing first hand information and an example right before you and you can hardly forget that** and specifically I remember he said that, that you know one isn't safe in a job either, so **I mean that clearly puts it out to you that you know it's better taking that option of starting a business** knowing that you're taking a risk and the possible returns from that are much better than the returns from just staying in a job, which also has just about the same risk ...'

Guest speaker sessions seemed to provide an element of motivation, which in turn deepens the learning experience. This was more acutely experienced with successful business entrepreneurs than with interaction with Programme Officers. The quotation below illustrates the learning from such an experience.

'I actually realise in ourselves after the first BGS session because when you watch that video of that lady **I was totally like absorbed in watching this thing because**

it was real and she was living it and she was giving practical [advice]. “This is what I did, my business is doing this right now”, and for me I was learning. I was learning how to pick it up. You know, I’m not saying it has to be, I think again it comes back to content or being your necessarily your facts and whatnot but just those lessons coming through from that practical experience of other people.’

Programme experience that forms a part of this thematic relationship is scant and it is worth noting that there are no recorded experiences related to internalised learning from either the experiences with facilitators (Programme Officers) or from the individual mentors that are provided to each participant as part of their involvement with the Programme.

Engagement by Participants

The thematic relationship between engagement by participants and Category Three suggests an articulation of an external event and a degree of internalisation of learning in such a way as to suggest changes to current or future action, and/or behaviour or attitude change. It is worth noting that actual change is not a part of this category of description; the awareness of some future impact as a result of a current learning event is sufficient to depict internalisation.

The first set of quotations cited below describe the adjustment in thinking that results from engagement with the Programme. This depicts an internal awareness of a learning event. The event is recognised and valued; however, its real value is the adjustment to intellectual orientation.

‘I realise that a lot of the work, the thing is, **the things we learn here aren’t just facts like learning at school or aren’t ways of doing things so rather ways of thinking** and stuff ...’

This adjustment to ways of thinking creates some anxiety around the learning experience. The quotation below illustrates this, and the concern with learning enough through the Programme activities.

'Okay let me explain it better like my whole thing is, **okay; I'm learning how to think, right? I need more knowledge to think about in that way of thinking. Do you know, do you understand? I don't have enough of my brain to think about in the way that I'm supposed to be thinking about it.** It's like I'd be saying, I need more case studies and stuff to read and really absorb like what's going on and things because if I stop I don't feel like I know enough. I'm like I don't feel like I know enough.'

Clearly, the process of internalisation is challenging, and as illustrated by the often confusing and circular language in the quotation above, it is experienced in a somewhat chaotic manner through the various Programme activities.

This thematic relationship includes an element of external engagement as a result of the learning experience, albeit in a limited way.

'For me personally, I think it's maybe more entrepreneurially minded and how I perceive different situations. **Obviously I can apply my entrepreneurial knowledge. And even like the simplest thing you will be able to view it from the perspective of what business could come out of it or what do I do to fix this type of situation,** you know, economically. And I think, *ja*, that's what I've found with it, with the programme and what you gain within the programme.'

The response given above is a broad endorsement of the Programme experience; there is perceived value in the Programme activities and events as the means of creating an enterprising individual. There is a comfort with enacting this in the world – through the way everyday situations are perceived, and with a problem-solving mindset that is able to perceive solutions to business or economic situations.

The quotation cited below supports the view that the Programme seeks to change the perspective of participants, at least with regard to how they engage with the world from an economic standpoint.

'I think the education also opened our eyes, **like when we see a product now I don't think we'll just see it from a consumer's point of view, you think about what it involved to get the product there and we started to think more as entrepreneurs** which I think also has a significant influence in our development as entrepreneurs.'

While the Programme does not require or encourage participants to begin business ventures during the period of their university studies, a small group of Programme participants initiated small businesses. These ventures, while not necessarily evidence of entrepreneurial ability or acumen, are examples of initiative and self-reliance. They also act as living experiments for concepts and ideas that are discussed and explored in the Programme. The quotation below is illustrative of the value of these ventures from a learning perspective.

'I think for me it's quite an immense learning curve, because I'm in the process of starting a few businesses of my own and **I found that even the seemingly mediocre things that we did last year and Year Zero** [the first year of the Foundation's programme] **in terms of research and so on, I've actually needed to use lots of the things that we did back then** and researching my business ideas and so on, so I kind of gathered that **even though it might seem a bit silly, or a bit mediocre in the beginning, but those are the building blocks of anything entrepreneurial.**'

The above quotation shows some of the pitfalls of a learning programme that is not fully integrated with the life stage of the participant. Programme learning activities

that “*might seem a bit silly*” are actually of some value when a worthwhile situation for application is presented.

This thematic relationship has illustrated how, from an external event, a surface approach to learning can be followed, and then as a further step is taken, awareness as to the impact upon future behaviour and/or attitudes is evidenced. As was suggested by the final quotation cited above, some of this internalisation of awareness occurs retrospectively as an opportunity for application of learning, such as the starting of a new business venture.

Reflective Behaviour

The thematic relationship between reflective behaviour and Category Three is illustrative of an active reflective process. The experience of learning on the Programme is characterised by the use of all available learning opportunities as opportunities for careful and conscious reflection. An experience of learning on the Programme at this level shows a complete understanding of the nature of the learning activity – from the transfer of skill or knowledge to the underlying second-order outcomes such as leadership skills, teamwork skills, or thinking skills, to the application of this in current and future plans and aspirations. What would not be clearly shown in this thematic relationship are examples of where the reflective practice has led to different behaviour or has impacted upon future learning based on the reflective practice.

This thematic relationship shows a link made between the Programme and university degree studies. In the quotation that follows, two important links are made, firstly, between the course of study and the Programme, and, secondly, between problems and opportunities, indicating the development of an opportunity-orientated mindset.

'Well, I find it has very little to do directly with my degree, obviously with engineering, but **engineering is about problem solving and so is entrepreneurship in a way but you, you find the problem or you see an opportunity and you try and find solutions or ways of capitalizing on that.** I find that it does help with the problem-solving aspect of engineering.'

In addition to a connection between degree studies and the Programme, this thematic relationship shows an extension into possible work opportunities.

'And then also with, when you're doing certain parts of engineering like when you start **thinking about what you're going to get into career-wise and you see how entrepreneurship and those two can actually tie together.** It's quite a good field to sort of be allowed access into.'

There is an inherent long-term characteristic to the type of reflective behaviour typified in this thematic relationship. The internalisation of the learning experience and the ability to see the value well beyond the immediate needs of assessment tasks or current life events is illustrated by the following quotation.

'**From the content I've come to learn that your business ideas as an entrepreneur won't come through overnight,** it's going to take some time and there's room, there's a lot of room for creativity, but there's also got to be structure in what you do there is certain steps that you have to follow, **but I've realised that you can follow your passion but it's not always as glitzy and glamorous as it looks, when you look at it someone has a big business and it looks like all they did was come up with a bright idea, there's a lot of hard work behind it and it makes you value that entrepreneurship more** and it makes you want to rise to the challenge to follow those steps and **not just come up with a bright idea and hope it will work overnight, but actually put work into something that you'll be proud of in the end.**'

The above quotation suggests three things. Firstly, the lessons from the Programme are long-term in nature – *“I’ve come to learn that your business ideas as an entrepreneur won’t come through overnight”* and *“not just come up with a bright idea and hope it will work overnight”*. Secondly, while connecting with and following your passion is an objective of the Programme, the consequence for this is not *“glitz and glamour”* but hard work. Finally, the quotation suggests a movement towards self-directed learning; the final line in the quotation – *“actually put work into something that you’ll be proud of in the end”*, would seem to suggest an internal motivation to learn.

This thematic relationship has illustrated deep reflection on the Programme activities and, as such, demonstrates a deep approach to learning. The quotations shared in this section show that deep links between degree studies and the Programme activities are made, and illustrate the construction of a realistic and long-term image of an entrepreneurial future.

6.4.4 Category Four – Action Flowing from the Learning Experience

Category Four represents the highest level of experience of learning in the Programme. While including all previous categories, it represents an experience characterised by action flowing from the learning experience.

Learning Context and Environment

The thematic relationship between learning context and environment and Category Four represents the highest level of engagement with the learning environment and context in such a way as to generate a sense of challenge regarding the learning experience, and a shared sense of discovery among Programme participants and with the facilitator and other role players. Of particular interest is the way in which

Programme learning is segued into university studies (and vice versa); this would seem to provide an example of co-construction.

'With regards to the content in the course, it helps bridge the gap for me between my studies and what it is that I actually want to end up eventually doing in the sense that what we learn in our course packs and stuff, when you guys are saying that it seems apparent at the time, **I find that sometimes it's reiterated in a lecture, or if someone mentions something about it and I'm already like, "Oh, I'm with Allan Gray, I've done this already"**. For instance, **this year we did a subject called Business Communications, and there we had to learn about presenting things and things like that, but because we've gone through the Allan Gray process, since the end of Matric, the selection camp and in first year, and all we've been doing is basically presentations, how to present yourself, how to listen effectively, how to speaking effectively and all those things.'**

This thematic relationship also illustrates a comprehensive and all-inclusive experience with regard to the Programme activities and events. The quotation below illustrates this point.

'So I think it's that, what you said, translating the theory that we did and actually putting it into practice ... last year it was the same thing. We learnt more about the markets, because we were forced to go and research what markets are about, why do we research markets, why do we need to do any sort of research to begin with and know, you know, look, diversify our knowledge about the markets that we learnt about last year and how it relates to this year, so I think that helps with the application as well.'

There are few examples that illustrate action flowing from the experience of learning in the Programme; a small group of participants are able to see the shared learning between the Programme activities and their university learning.

Role Player Interactions

This thematic relationship between role player interactions and Category Four refers to the highest level of interaction within the Programme and is typified by a learning experience where learning occurs as interplay between the parties. The learning experience is more of a continuous one and not necessarily limited to a single event.

A recurrent theme is that of the role of diversity of role players in providing an environment in which different views, perspectives and opinions are shared.

The quotation below illustrates the value placed on this diversity.

‘But what I do find is very helpful is when we are in groups and everyone has an input and you see people’s perspectives, and because everyone has a different background, you know, and **everyone has a different perspective, it gives you a more holistic idea of what is going on.**’

To further support this diversity within the Programme, Humanities students were included in 2009, alongside those studying for degrees in Commerce, Engineering and Science. This was also highlighted as a valuable inclusion from the perspective of Programme diversity and participant interrelationships.

‘And when we experienced this year, especially with the introduction of humanity students, I felt that it was very interesting to see that we often, **because of the commerce degree we also have a certain way of thinking, but once you bring in other type of individuals who think differently, it makes it more interesting and we learn more from each other in that way.**’

In this thematic relationship, a far higher value is placed upon inter-participant interactions, even if the learning that occurs is not as fully supported by greater life or work experience.

Engagement by Participants

The thematic relationship between engagement by participants and Category Four illustrates a high level of awareness that can be explained as mindfulness – a state of conscious external and internal awareness and a heightened sense of how this awareness may impact upon or influence current or future actions and/or behaviour.

The quotation below is illustrative of this thematic relationship.

'I also think that even if it's like 10 years from now, even today as well you find yourself walking past a business and you see something and you think, hang on, there's something that I read about in the contact sessions that I could apply here, maybe I should go talk to the manager and tell him this is what I learned. It just instils that, that knowledge in you that makes you want to go out and do something and I think even though in the future when you do start making decisions when you have to come up with that business plan, it might not come up as in when you come up with the plan and you use lateral thinking, you will be thinking back I'm using lateral thinking right now get into that mood but, it sort of, it gets into you and you find yourself using it without even realising it and I think it's going to impact in the sense that once you go 10 years down the line and you're making those decisions, what you learnt back then will come up and assist you in that decision-making process.'

This quotation gives a very clear indication of how Programme engagement has led to a deep approach to learning. What follows below is a careful examination of this quotation and a presentation of how this may be illustrative of mindful engagement.

Firstly, there is recognition of future benefit; the future is mentioned more than once as the point of beneficitation – *“I also think that even if it's like 10 years from now”*, and, *“I think it's going to impact in the sense that once you go 10 years down the line”*. Both these comments are rare examples of forward thinking based on a current

learning event. There is an immediacy around each learning activity that forms a part of the Programme, coupled with pressure to complete assessment tasks within the period of the calendar year, that do not lend themselves to forward thinking of the style exhibited in the quotation above.

Secondly, there is illustration of action in the world with respect to knowledge. The first *use* of new knowledge is an engagement with an externally perceived opportunity – “*you find yourself walking past a business and you see something and you think, hang on, there’s something that I read about in the contact sessions that I could apply here, maybe I should go talk to the manager and tell him this is what I learned*”. Along with the perceived opportunity – “*you find yourself walking past a business and you see something*”, there is an immediate link back to the session activities and materials – “*something that I read about in the contact sessions*”. What is most illuminating from this section of the quotation is that it alludes to possible future action – “*maybe I should go talk to the manager*”.

Thirdly, there may be an understanding of how the Programme activities and events may help to shape future business plans. This is illustrated by the understanding that the Programme is insidious and seeks to grow the individual in a way that knowledge gained is shaping a view of the world rather than providing a toolkit for all eventualities – “*it just instils that, that knowledge in you that makes you want to go out and do something and I think even though in the future when you do start making decisions ... it gets into you and you find yourself using it without even realising it*”. This quotation shows how the Programme acts in a catalytic way, encouraging entrepreneurial activity – “*makes you want to go out and do something*”, as well as how the Programme learning experiences may build an unconscious comfort with

being entrepreneurial – “*it gets into you and you find yourself using it without even realising it*”.

This thematic relationship sought to illustrate how Programme participation reaches a level of heightened awareness, explained as mindfulness, with respect to the Programme.

Reflective Behaviour

The thematic relationship between reflective behaviour and Category Four, the final thematic relationship, represents the highest level of reflective behaviour associated with the Programme experience. Experiences categorised under this thematic relationship show a deep sense of understanding of reflective behaviour, and more importantly, exhibits how prior reflective practice has led to new modes of behaviour.

There are few suitable quotations that are specifically illustrative of this thematic relationship. The quotation below is one of very few examples of where a participant is attempting to see the value in the learning activities and how this may shape future action.

‘So I’ll write about [it] if I had to implement it, like what does it hold for me in the future now that I’ve learned something brand new, and with everything else that I have learned, how is it going to impact me?’

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the current study. Using both the phenomenographic and the grounded theory approach, the data transcripts of a series of focus group interviews over a three-year period with 80 Programme participants

located in three regions in South Africa – yielded four dominant themes and four categories of description. The dominant themes that were identified are as follows.

The experience of learning is described as:

- The nature of the learning context and environment;
- The nature of the interactions between participants, facilitators, and other role players;
- The nature of engagement by participants; and
- The nature of reflective behaviour exhibited by the participants.

These themes served to contextualise four categories of description, which are representative of the qualitatively different ways in which participants experienced learning on the Programme.

The categories of description were as follows.

An experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education is experienced as:

- Identification with the learning experience;
- Connection with the learning experience;
- Internalisation of the learning experience; and
- Action flowing from the learning experience.

The relationship between the dominant themes and categories of description gave rise to the outcome space, a matrix illustrating sixteen thematic relationships. These thematic relationships were presented above and were illustrated with quotations from the focus group interviews, which serve to highlight certain aspects of these relationships.

7 Discussion of the Findings

The current study is contextualised within the South African environment, with a particular focus on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Chapter 1 presented the background to the study as well as the problem statement. The problem statement made the link between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial activity, and socio-economic development. Chapter 2 argued for an approach to entrepreneurship education that is based on a constructivist understanding of the learning process. This was further supported through discussion of constructivism as a paradigm of learning, and experiential learning theory as an enactment of this paradigm. Approaches to learning that provide a construct that identifies a deep or surface approach to learning, were presented. Chapter 3 presented the methodological framework for the current study, and argued for the use of a blended methodology comprising phenomenography and grounded theory. In Chapter 4, the research site was detailed and explained. The application of the selected methodologies was explained in Chapter 5. The current chapter presents a synthesis of the research findings (found in Chapter 6) and discusses these findings in the context of relevant literature.

7.1 Experience of Learning

The findings of this study, presented in the previous chapter, are represented through four dominant themes and four categories of description. Following the phenomenographic methodology, these are displayed as an outcome space (see Chapter 6), which shows the interrelationship between these themes and categories, as well as the hierarchical nature of the categories of description. This section will

present a synthesis of the research findings, with particular reference to how these address the two research questions.

The first research question is posed as follows:

- What are the qualitatively different ways in which students experience an experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education?

Participants on the programme experienced learning in one of four ways. The four ways of experiencing learning can be further grouped into two broader clusters that describe the ways in which learning was both experienced *and* approached. These two clusters of learning have been described as follows:

A superficial experience of learning includes the first two categories of description – identification of the learning experience, and connection with the learning experience. An immersed experience of learning includes the second two categories of description – internalization of the learning experience and action flowing from the learning experience.

7.1.1 A Superficial Experience of Learning

A superficial experience of learning, comprising the first two categories of description – identification of the learning experience, and connection with the learning experience – can be considered representative of what Marton and Saljo (1984) have described as a surface approach to learning. These two categories articulate an experience of learning that is characterised by no more than the identification and/or description of the learning experience. There is no further engagement with the experience, and this level of learning is indicative of a very low engagement with, and commitment to, the learning experience. This lack of engagement is in contrast to the profound importance of engagement in learning

situations. Jarvis (2010) suggests that most learning is derived from our engagement with, and transformation of, the experiences of everyday life, including formal and informal learning. A superficial experience of learning may also be indicative of a lack of awareness of the opportunities that are on offer in a learning experience, and that harnessing these opportunities requires action on the part of the student. This could be attributed to a lack of agency on the part of the student, where agency is understood as ‘desiring, for forming intentions, and for acting creatively’ (Sewell, 1992, p. 20). In some instances, experiences of learning on the Programme showed a movement towards internalisation through making some, albeit small, personal connection with the learning event. This is usually evidenced through a connection between the learning experience on the Programme and some prior learning experience (Harris, 1999). This experience of learning highlights that commitment is required during the learning experience in order to derive value. Kolb (1984, p. 230) suggests that commitment is the result of ‘integrated knowing’ in which ideals are fused with concrete experience of here-and-now. Value is created through engaging in a memory-focused activity, engaging with what one already knows or has experienced and making fairly simple associative connections between current experiences and prior lived experiences (Miller & Boud, 1996).

The findings suggest that a superficial experience of learning manifests itself for three reasons. Firstly, the nature of the Programme may well have created some confusion for participants. The Programme’s location within higher education, together with its non-credit bearing nature, creates an environment in which participants may have found it challenging to switch between their formal university studies and the experiential nature of the Programme. The Programme relied heavily on self-directed learning and self-motivation. A superficial experience of learning, in

all likelihood, originates in primary and secondary schooling, which is tolerant of a surface approach to learning. Ramsden (1984) suggests that in a formal learning environment, a surface approach to learning is usually manifest through a lack of interest in the learning task, or a failure to perceive the relevance of the material. He goes on to say that a surface approach to learning may be the result of insufficient background knowledge for the discipline being studied. Studies that have examined the relationship between students' approaches to learning and the learning environment have suggested that a surface approach to learning may be the result of a learning environment that promotes rote learning, recall and memorization (see Trigwell, Prosser, & Waterhouse, 1999). Notwithstanding the circumstances that may result in a deep or surface approach to learning, these capacities exist alongside each other and individuals may have the ability to engage in a learning task with either approach (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985a).

Secondly, was the participant's ability to practise reflective observation. It is clear from the findings that in these two categories participants struggled with reflective practice, and despite its inclusion as part of the Programme assessment, the data suggest that being reflective proved to be challenging. The skill of reflective observation was no doubt new to most participants. The method used for reflective practice, the keeping of a learning journal, may well have been a barrier for those participants who struggled with expressing their learning in written form. Reflexivity in experiential learning is an essential step in the learning cycle. Moon (2004, p. 82) defines reflection as 'a form of mental processing – like a form of thinking – that we may use to fulfill a purpose or achieve some anticipated outcome or we may simply *be reflective* and then an outcome can be unexpected'. The need for reflection is not only linked to the cycle of experiential learning, but also to acquiring the skills of

learning (Main, 1985). The challenges experienced with reflecting through the mechanism of a journal are echoed in the literature (see Moon, 2004; Moon, 2006). The use of journals as an element of clinical medical education is well reported (Chirema, 2007; Platzer, Snelling, & Blake, 1997). However, there is scant mention of the role of journals as a reflective tool for entrepreneurship education (Tan & Ng, 2006). A learning journal is a tool in support of a constructivist view of learning. This suggests that learning occurs through a combination of the student's construction of knowledge and their prior experiences, into 'a flexible network of ideas and feelings, some more closely associated and some further apart' (Moon, 2006, p. 19). A possible barrier for students in their reflective journaling may have been the fact that they regarded the journal as an assessed task. Assessment of reflective journaling is highly problematic as it seeks to place a judgment on an individual's personal development (Knights, 1985). However, assessment of a journal is not necessarily a negative or invasive experience. Moon (2006) suggests that this could be viewed as a collaborative activity to assist a student in bringing structure and discipline to their reflective work.

Finally, in the design of the Programme, assumptions regarding the participants' prior learning experiences, were made. No consideration was given to the need for individualised learning paths, or for diversity in learning style and ability. The need to accommodate diversity in learning has been highlighted as an important element of entrepreneurship education programmes (Volkman et al., 2009). While participants who exhibited a superficial experience of learning on the Programme may well emerge with some entrepreneurial skills, they would arguably not develop the cognitive ability evidenced through an entrepreneurial mindset, described as 'the

ability to rapidly sense, act, and mobilize, even under uncertain conditions' (Haynie et al., 2010, p. 218).

7.1.2 An Immersed Experience of Learning

The findings discussed in the previous chapter identified two experiences of learning on the Programme that can be characterised with an immersed experience of learning. These experiences of learning are described as an internalisation of the learning experience, and as the exhibition of action or behaviour change flowing from the learning experience. An immersed experience of learning is consistent with a deep approach to learning (Marton & Saljo, 1984). An immersed experience of learning is at a more sophisticated level of learning than a superficial experience of learning. Students who exhibited an immersed experience of learning, 'see learning as finding meaning through the medium of learning tasks: They see things in a new light; they relate them to their earlier experiences; they relate them to the world they live in; they see learning as changing oneself in some way' (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 35). In the immersed experience of learning, the student makes the learning experience meaningful and personal through a process of internalisation. This internalisation could be the byproduct of student interest in the subject, material or learning task. Moon (2006, p. 59) concurs with this view, stating that 'a learner who is interested in a topic is likely to take a deep approach'. A deep approach to learning is associated with the meaning attached to learning materials and tasks. This is closely allied to a holistic approach to the structure of the experience (Ramsden, 2003). A holistic structure, contrasted with an atomistic structure implies that students maintain the structure of the learning experience through connection rather than through isolation (Ramsden, 2003). Interest and enthusiasm for learning is also a function of course

design, assessment strategies and teacher/instructor approach to learning (Ramsden, 1984).

The learning experience is, through a conscious cognitive process, linked to existing models of learning, or is used to support parallel learning experiences. This is consistent with the view of cognitivism, which supports the creation of knowledge from within, through stimuli from the outside world (Marton & Booth, 1997). Cognitivism, though, attempts to explain the *outer* world in terms of the *inner* world. This is a view that is in contrast to constructivism which suggests that ‘there is not a real world *out there* and a subjective world *in here*. The world is not constructed by the learner, nor is it imposed upon her; it is constituted as an internal relation between them’ (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 13). The findings of the current study are better aligned with a self-directed style of learning, and is further illustrative of a constructivist approach to entrepreneurial learning (Löbler, 2006) rather than a cognitivist style.

The immersed experience of learning is a sophisticated experience in that the student is able to move beyond the skills or content of the learning, and is able to understand the intrinsic nature of the *process* of learning. This differentiation is similar to that of Ryle’s (1984) concepts of *knowing that* and *knowing how*. The former refers to knowledge about the world, and the latter to the ability to do something in a particular way, essentially a skill (Ryle, 1984).

The immersed experience of learning shows a significant move by the student to understand, engage, and interact with the learning experience, and to plan or enact some action or behaviour as a result. Ramsden (2003) supports this view, stating that a deep approach to learning is more likely to produce a higher-quality outcome. The *action* identified in the findings of the current study have greater affinity with

reflection-in-action, akin to Schön's (1983) conceptualization. Reflection-in-action is a mechanism we employ that allows for a degree of *thinking-on-our feet*, what Schön (1983, p. 56) suggests occurs when 'intuitive performance leads to surprises'.

Unlike in a superficial experience of learning, where the focus is on retention and memory, in an immersed experience of learning there is a focus on the integration of learning with prior experience, so as to create knowledge for the future. The role of prior knowledge, learning and experience cuts across a number of conceptualisations of learning (Illeris, 2009; Jarvis, 2010; Moon, 2004). While a number of studies focus on the assessment of prior learning (see Kolb, 1984; Weil & McGill, 1989), in the context of the current study, the interest is on the connection between current concrete experience and previous lived experience. This is more akin to a social theory of learning (Wenger, 2000), in which we place 'learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world' (Wenger, 2009, p. 209). Prior learning may be further understood through the concepts of internal and external learning. External learning refers to the material of the learning experience, whereas internal learning is 'the experience that the learning brings to the learning situation' (Moon, 2004, p. 23).

In the current study, participants who exhibited an immersed experience of learning showed an ability to draw upon prior experience and integrate this with current concrete experience in order to imagine, plan, and execute new and different responses.

The findings suggest two reasons for why participants would experience learning on the Programme in terms of an immersed experience of learning. Firstly, addressing some of the shortcomings described in the previous section would lead to an ability to experience the Programme in a manner consistent with a deep approach to learning.

The ability to move easily between the Programme learning style and the style of learning in the participant's formal university course may have been a factor in determining the experience of learning. A contrast between formal and informal learning would assist in better understanding this ability. Formal learning refers to learning that occurs in a classroom setting, whereas informal learning occurs in an unstructured and spontaneous manner (Merriam & Brockett, 1997). The current study examined a programme of learning that combined elements of formal and informal learning. However, the lack of formal assessment that led to advancement in the Programme, may well have signaled to participants that the learning environment was informal. The pressure associated with a formal learning environment in which assessment does lead to advancement, is another factor that can lead to a lapse into surface learning (Ramsden, 1984, 2003). Likewise, the ability to practise reflective self-awareness through the learning experience may have influenced the experience of learning. Linked to this is the participant's primary and secondary school learning experiences that would have served to prepare them for higher education and self-directed learning. Reflective self-awareness can be understood as 'an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it' (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1996, p. 33). Self-awareness is linked to self-directed learning, in as much as it is about 'the individual who can break away from the group and become a change agent' (Jarvis, 2010, p. 65). Self-directed learning is also about self-reliance and self-management, in which a student knows how one best functions in groups and alone, and is able to make use of that knowledge in a learning situation (Moon, 2004).

Secondly, the issues of enthusiasm and excitement for entrepreneurship present themselves as reasons for experiencing learning as an immersed way. The link

between students' interest and an immersed experience of learning has already been discussed; however, this point is more concentrated on the student's passion for entrepreneurship. While all participants were screened for their entrepreneurial ambitions, it is not unreasonable to assume that some participants showed a greater affinity with being entrepreneurs. This would have supported their sense of identity as an entrepreneur through past experience and through their engagement with the immediate learning environment (McKenzie, 2003). Links to family business or family environments that connected to the world of business and/or entrepreneurship would likewise positively impact on a participant's sense of identity as an entrepreneur (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009).

7.1.3 Qualitatively Different Experiences of Learning

In the light of the above discussion, the following inferences emerge. The hierarchical nature of the categories of description represents four qualitatively different ways in which participants experience learning on the Programme. This experience of learning ranges from a simple identification and description of the experience at the less sophisticated and superficial level, to planning and/or action regarding a change in behaviour as a result of the learning experience at the sophisticated and immersed level. There is a link between the categories of description identified and discussed in this study, and prior discussion and argument regarding opportunity recognition as an element of entrepreneurship, and in particular pattern recognition. It could be argued that participants experiencing learning in a superficial manner would make use of prototype models of pattern recognition. In these models, an entrepreneur (or student) compares internal templates to external stimuli or inputs (Baron, 2006). Those lacking prior experience, either of entrepreneurship or of experiential learning, would be less likely to generate

sophisticated and reflective responses to their current learning experiences. By contrast, exemplar models use more sophisticated ways of comparing external inputs to knowledge gained from past experience and organised in such a way as to create highly-specific models for evaluating opportunity (Baron, 2006). Exemplar models, it could be argued, are used by participants who experience learning in an immersed manner, consistent with a deep approach to learning.

7.2 Kolb Interrupted

Following from the previous section, in which the research findings were synthesised in as much as they pertain to the ways in which participants experience learning, this section addresses the second research question, namely,

- In what ways does understanding students' experiences of learning inform the theoretical understanding of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) when applied to entrepreneurship education?

The objective associated with this research question is to understand how qualitatively different ways of experiencing a programme of entrepreneurship education based upon Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle can inform the application of that theory of learning to other similar experientially-based programmes.

In examining the results of this study and the discussion in the prior section, two issues arise that address the second research question. These are:

- The role of prior experience in the experiential learning cycle; and
- The challenges that participants experience with reflective self-awareness.

It is these two issues that signal the break in the learning flow represented by Kolb's ELC; it is at this point that the Kolb cycle is *interrupted*. This interruption may offer

an explanation as to why there was evidence of only a limited degree of reflective ability in Programme participants. This may be particular to the participants in the current study, but given the duration of the study, and the relatively large number of participants, this is more likely to be a significant feature of students' learning in general, at least within the South African context. The need to be reflective, not only from an entrepreneurial standpoint, but from a learning standpoint, cannot be over-emphasised. Neck and Green's (2011) model of entrepreneurial learning suggests that a mode of learning that is rooted in cognition is required to take full advantage of a model of entrepreneurship that is linked to opportunity recognition and developing an entrepreneurial mindset. As students approach a learning activity that requires self-direction and an experiential approach, it would appear that some find it difficult to move into reflective observation with any degree of confidence or skill. The need to reflect on the concrete experience before moving into abstract conceptualisation is clearly illustrated in Kolb's model, as well as those of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). This inability to move forward leaves students languishing in the concrete experience level of the experiential learning cycle. This would explain why, in this study, participants were so readily able to identify the learning experience and even create some connection with the experience, but had not moved into the stages of internalisation and action. The stage of concrete experience is thus associated with the first two categories of description (or a superficial experience of learning), and stages that flow from reflective observation illustrate the second two categories of description (or a immersed experience of learning).

Students may struggle to engage with experiential learning as a result of two factors. Firstly, formative educational experiences may not have placed value on prior experience or experience-based learning. Secondly, coupled to this is a limited pool

of past experiences, especially entrepreneurial experiences, to draw upon in making sense of current experiences. Given that the ELC is a cycle, it stands to reason that prior experience upon which to build active experimentation in order to make sense, in turn, of new concrete experiences, is needed.

The findings of this study suggest that in many instances, participants did not have a reservoir of prior experience upon which to draw in making sense of highly experiential activities that formed the basis of the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation Entrepreneurial Development Programme. These points of *interruption* are examples of where participants exhibited a superficial experience of learning rather than an immersed experience of learning.

These two *interruptions* to Kolb's ELC cycle are further discussed below.

7.2.1 Prior Experience and Concrete Experience

Kolb (1984, p. 30) suggests that learning from concrete experience is an ability, and that students 'must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias, in new experiences'. This is, at least within the context of the current study, highly problematic. The results of the current study show that there is some inability on the part of the Programme participants to identify a learning experience, as described by Category One. However, this mode of experiencing learning on the Programme is associated with a superficial experience of learning, and does not carry the same learning value as higher modes of Programme experience (Categories Three and Four). The findings illustrate a difficulty for participants in moving beyond an identification of or with concrete experiences. The clues to understanding why participants find themselves *trapped* in the concrete experience phase of the ELC, may lie in their prior learning experiences. Kolb (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, 2010; 1981,

1984; 1985; Kolb et al., 2001; Kolb & Fry, 1975) is largely silent as to the role that prior learning experience plays with respect to engagement with current concrete experience. This is in contrast to other writings regarding experiential learning, in which the role of prior experience is discussed extensively. These discussions focus predominantly on the recognition and assessment of prior learning for academic entrance, advancement and work-based promotion (Barkatoolah, 1989), and the role of prior teaching and learning experiences on current learning experiences (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Trigwell et al., 1999). Furthermore, and according to Moon (2004), prior learning does indeed have an influence on the process of learning from current, concrete experience. Within the context of informal or incidental learning, researchers have suggested that ‘people diagnose and frame a new situation with prior experience, identifying similarities or differences, and use their interpretation to make sense of the new challenge’ (Marsick & Watkins, 2001, p. 30). Prior experience of learning should not be confused with tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge refers to knowledge that is practical, personal, contextually-bound, and difficult to share or communicate (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2001), and is more often associated with an ‘intuitive mode of cognition’ in which tacit prior knowledge is used in almost instinctive manner (Eraut, 2000, p. 126). It may be more accurate to speak of *prior experiences* than of prior experience (Starr-Glass, 2002).

Of interest in the current study is what may have prevented Programme participants from moving beyond the stage of concrete experience. One cannot ignore the context within which the study has taken place, and the social, economic and political environment of South Africa and the *apartheid* past that may have had an influence on the manner in which learning was experienced. This is consistent with the view of education and knowledge during *apartheid*, in which ‘emancipatory education was a

perspective that regarded knowledge as being constructed by the learner ... as a system of connected knowledge' (Criticos, 1989, p. 159). This view is supported by Freire (1970), who suggested that liberation education was an act of cognition in which there was an interplay between the learner, teacher and context. This has been extensively examined in the contemporary South African context (Jansen, 2009; Morrow, 2007; Ramphela, 2002, 2008b). The role of *apartheid* and South Africa's unjust and distorted education system had a profound influence on the psyche of South African society, as 'the apartheid system understood that education is the one tried and tested way out of poverty, and they made sure that that route was blocked for the majority of the population' (Ramphela, 2008a, p. 158).

Thus, Kolb's (1984) ideal that students should engage with concrete experience in a manner that does not account for past and prior experience, may not be appropriate in the context of the current study, and does not fully account for personal and societal issues that impact upon the teaching and learning process.

7.2.2 Reflection and Reflective Observation

Kolb is less clear as to how he defined or understands reflective observation within the context of his ELC. He writes that students would need to 'reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives' (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). He juxtaposes reflection against action, creating polar opposites in his model where reflective observation is regarded as the opposing process to active experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). In a more recent examination of play and experience, Kolb offers a more useful construction of his ELC, by suggesting that the four stages are feeling, reflection, thinking, and action (Kolb & Kolb, 2010). Kolb is not alone in his suggestion that reflection is of profound importance in the experiential learning

process. A number of researchers have attested to this (see Boud et al., 1985a, 1985b; Boud et al., 1996; Boud & Walker, 1991; Dewey, 1938; Knights, 1985; Main, 1985; Schön, 1983, 1988). However, what is highlighted in the current study is the lack of reflection by Programme participants. This lack of reflective ability is not uncommon among students (Moon, 2004). The shortcoming of Kolb's model (1984) is that it does not account for varied ability to reflect. The work of King and Kitchener (1994) identified a number of stages for reflective judgement. The current study finds an alignment with their *Quasi-Reflective Thinking Stage*, in which students understand the need to present evidence that may assist in understanding a problem or learning situation. However, they appear to be unclear as to how to use this knowledge effectively. This mode of reflective practice does not allow for engagement with opposing points of view. Baxter Magolda's (1992) work with college students and graduates identified four conceptions of *knowing*. Of these the *absolutist* – knowledge is certain and absolute, and the *transitional stage* – there is partial certainty and uncertainty, may offer insights into the lack of reflective awareness and observation among Programme participants.

The current study reveals that reflection does not occur as a natural and simple part of the experiential learning cycle. These barriers to learning through and from reflection are often the result of previous educational experiences, the climate of the current learning experience, and the unwillingness of the participants to expose themselves to judgement from others through the sharing of reflective learning (Platzer, Blake, & Ashford, 2000). Previous education experience and experiences are critical to developing reflective skills (Rogers, 2001). Boud and Walker (1993) offer four aspects associated with the re-evaluation of an experiential learning experience, that can provide insight into the difficulty associated with the task of reflection:

- Association – the linking of the present experience with past experiences;
- Integration – integrating the new experience with existing learning;
- Validation – testing the new learning in some way; and
- Appropriation – making the learning one’s own.

Thus, the second point of interruption of Kolb’s ELC is the ability of the student to offer effective reflection and reflective observation of the concrete experience, and thus to be able to move forward in the cycle to abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

In light of the above, while Kolb’s ELC represents a useful theory of learning, it does not appear to translate sufficiently into a theory of pedagogy. The creation of learning activities that in some way mirrors the ELC or forces a student to engage with the reflective observation does not make for meaningful experiential learning. What is evident from the findings is that students do in fact learn through experience, and may even learn through some kind of cycle of experiential learning. However, this is not always evident from their active reflection (for example, the keeping of a journal) or from their meta-reflection (for example, through focus group interviews).

With regard to the role of the ELC in teaching and learning entrepreneurship, this would appear to be supported by the findings. Entrepreneurship is essentially a practical discipline, one better suited to activity than to classroom-based instruction. It is clear from the findings that students find significant value in a wide range of practical and experientially-based activities as a means of learning entrepreneurship. What was not clear, however, was whether this was merely a welcome break from other more didactic learning activities, or whether the experiential learning activities promoted a greater understanding of the subject and mastery of the relevant cognitive and action-orientated skills.

In light of the above discussion, it is suggested that Kolb's ELC was interrupted at the point of concrete experience, given the lack of a link to prior experiences, and reflective observation as a result of participants not demonstrating the use of reflective practice. The effect of this on entrepreneurship education is two-fold. Firstly, students need to be taught to reflect – it is not sufficient to assume that reflective observation is a skill learned from formative education; and, secondly, entrepreneurship education requires a substantial component of experience-based activity to assist students to construct their knowledge. However, the use of the ELC as a pedagogical tool rather than a theory of learning should possibly be avoided until further investigation has taken place.

7.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a discussion of the thesis findings, and made links between these findings and appropriate and relevant literature. The categories of description logically split into two clusters, reflecting the experience of learning on the Programme as either a superficial or an immersed experience of learning. A superficial experience of learning comprises the first two categories of description presented in the previous chapter. These are an identification of the learning experience, and a connection with the learning experience. An immersed experience of learning includes the second two categories of description, namely, internalization of the learning experience, and action of behaviour change flowing from the learning experience. These two approaches to learning are respectively consistent with a surface and a deep approach to learning. These approaches to learning helped explain the four experiences of learning on the Programme, and contextualized the hierarchical nature of that learning. This served to address the first research question.

The second research question sought to use these experiences of learning on the Programme to better inform how Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle can be understood and applied within the context of entrepreneurship education. The findings suggest that Kolb's ELC is *interrupted* at two points – concrete experience, and reflective observation. This interruption occurs as a result of the lack of prior experience and experiences, and the lack of preparation and the ability to be reflective.

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8 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. In Chapter 1, the background to the study, the research problem, and the research questions were developed. The research problem was identified as follows.

Within the South African context, entrepreneurship is regarded as a vital driver of socio-economic growth and development (McPherson, 1996). Successive reports of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor have attested to South Africa's poor Total Entrepreneurial Activity, especially when compared to other similar efficiency-based economies. The link between entrepreneurship activity and entrepreneurship education is clear and has been articulated through reports of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Consortium and the World Economic Forum (for example, Bosma et al., 2008; Bosma et al., 2007; Bosma & Levie, 2009; Volkmann et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2011). In spite of substantial investment in various entrepreneurship development initiatives and endeavours, South Africa has failed to reach its potential with respect to entrepreneurial activity (Herrington et al., 2009).

Developing entrepreneurial ability requires a nuanced and complex pedagogical framework that takes into account its essentially experiential nature (Krueger, 2007). Understanding how entrepreneurship is taught and learned is critical to improving the overall quality of entrepreneurship education programmes. This improved educational experience will, in turn, have a positive impact on levels of entrepreneurial activity in South Africa and, by extension, socio-economic growth and development. Many entrepreneurship education programmes purport to be structured around experiential learning and examination and discussion of these programmes, but the published literature by other researchers (for example, Isaacs et

al., 2007; Kroon & Meyer, 2001; Nieman, 2001; North, 2006), is almost entirely of an evaluatory nature, and do not examine the phenomenon of entrepreneurship education from the perspective of the student. This creates a situation in which programmatic success or failure is easily ascribed to either the design of the curriculum, the ability of the student, or the prevailing conditions in which programme graduates find themselves after completion of the programme. What has not been examined is the interactional network of relationships between the student, the programme of learning, and the pedagogical framework.

Based on the research problem, the following two research questions were posed:

1. What are the qualitatively different ways in which students experience an experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education?
2. In what ways does understanding students' experience of learning inform the theoretical understanding of Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle when applied to entrepreneurship education?

The first research question was addressed in Chapter 6. In this chapter four qualitatively different ways of experiencing an experientially-based programme of entrepreneurship education were identified. These are as follows:

1. Identification and description of the learning experience.
2. Connection with the learning experience.
3. Internalisation of the learning experience.
4. Action or behaviour change flowing from the learning experience.

These four qualitatively different ways of experiencing were grouped into two broad clusters that illustrated experiences of learning. These are:

1. A superficial experience of learning, and

2. An immersed experience of learning.

The second research question, drawing on the findings from the first question, was addressed in Chapter 7. It was found that students' experience of learning was able to inform the use of Kolb's ELC through the identification of two points of interruption to the learning cycle. These are as follows:

1. Interruption of concrete experience – it was found that owing to prior learning experience and experiences, not all students were able to engage with a concrete learning experience in a manner that would be useful to experiential learning.
2. Interruption of reflective observation – it was found that reflective observation was a difficult activity for a student, by virtue of having mostly been exposed to experiences of learning in a manner that did not encourage or support reflection.

The specific research objectives for the study were stated in Chapter 1 as follows:

- To investigate the experiences of learning from the perspective of the students on an experientially-based entrepreneurship learning programme.
- To investigate the ways in which these experiences of learning can inform the use of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in entrepreneurship education programmes.

The first objective was met through the collection over a three-year period of experiences of learning from a group of 80 students, who were enrolled in a programme of experientially-based entrepreneurship education. This yielded the four qualitatively different ways of experiencing an experientially-based approach to entrepreneurship education.

The second objective was met through the application of the four qualitatively different ways of experiencing to Kolb's ELC. This yielded two ways in which Kolb's ELC is interrupted namely at the point of concrete experience, and at the point of reflective observation. This finding informed how the ELC is used in similar such programmes and contexts.

The contribution to knowledge of the study is discussed in following section, and is followed by areas for future research.

8.1 Contribution to Knowledge

In Chapter 1 it was argued that, by positively influencing the outcome of entrepreneurship education initiatives, a commensurate positive influence would be seen on entrepreneurship activity and therefore on socio-economic development. In light of the research problem, this study makes the following contribution to knowledge.

Experiential learning is a useful and appropriate theory of learning to apply to entrepreneurship education. The essentially experiential nature of entrepreneurship and the constructivist nature of experiential learning, make the learning experience personally relevant and contextually appropriate. Models of theories of experiential learning, as discussed in Chapter 2, present experiential learning as a cycle. These cycles are useful for understanding the process of learning. However, the application of experiential learning, especially in contexts and environments where prior learning, learning experience, and learning experiences is varied, needs to be more fully appreciated at the level of programme design. Students enter programmes of learning, especially those in higher education, with the full force of their prior learning. Within the South African context, this could mean that they are not skilled

or experienced in self-directed learning. This is illustrated in the findings (see Chapter 7) of this study, where participants exhibited a superficial experience of learning. This experience of learning is no doubt learned through primary and secondary schooling, and possibly even through higher education, in which the outcome is often valued over the process. Programmes of learning using experiential learning models will need to take cognisance of these differences in prior learning, and construct learning pathways to match individualised learning experiences.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) is a robust theory of learning, but should not necessarily be seen as a pedagogical model. Building on the previous point, and the discussion presented in Chapter 2, the role of Kolb's ELC in *teaching* needs to be considered. Kolb has not presented his theory of learning as the basis around which programmes of learning can be created. Kolb's theory presents an important contribution to learning theory, but needs to be carefully applied as a pedagogical influence. The current study has shown that application of Kolb's ELC as a pedagogical framework creates two points of *interruption*. Firstly, the manner in which students engage with concrete experience, in the light of their prior learning, learning experience and learning experiences. The findings of the current study illuminated that students, while able to identify a concrete experience, are not always able to infuse that experience with the attributes required for learning. This is consistent with a strategic approach to learning. The second point of interruption with respect to Kolb's ELC is at the point of reflective observation. Participants to the study illustrated difficulty with being reflective, and exhibited a number of barriers to effective reflection. An inability to move forward through reflective observation may well result in the process of experiential learning becoming meaningless and hollow. The important second and third stages, abstract

conceptualization and active experimentation, are not reached, or, if reached, the lack of reflective insight does not make for meaningful learning. These points of interruption are clues as to how Kolb's ELC should be used. It can be a useful informer of the way in which students learn from experiences – both past and current, and can guide the pace and structure of the learning environment. However, Kolb's ELC is not a blueprint for teaching, and alternate pedagogical frameworks should be employed for guiding teaching activities.

The findings of this study have shown that students' experience of learning on an experientially-based entrepreneurship education programme can be described as ranging from an ability to identify the learning experience and make simple connections with the programme, to a deeper level of engagement that is characterized by an internalization of the programme experience and action of behaviour change flowing from that experience. The former refers to a superficial experience of learning, similar in many respects to a surface approach to learning (Marton & Booth, 1997), while the latter reflects an immersed experience of learning, similar to a deep approach to learning (Marton & Booth, 1997). The identification of these two broad experiences of learning, superficial and immersed, are useful in as much as they illustrate the experience of learning *from the perspective of the student*. An objective of this study was to examine a programme of experientially-based entrepreneurship education from the perspective of the student. This is a marked move away from most entrepreneurship education programme investigations that are predominantly evaluatory in nature. The current study allows for a more nuanced understanding of the success factors associated with entrepreneurship education programmes, and highlights the multiplicity of variables that contribute to a positive outcome. These include programme design, understanding of the role of past and

prior learning experience and experiences, and the relative role of models of learning, especially models of experiential learning.

This section has detailed the ways in which the current study has made a contribution to knowledge. In the following section, recommendations for practice are made.

8.2 Recommendations

This study has implications for various areas of practice, in particular experiential learning, and entrepreneurship education. Flowing from these implications for practice are a number of recommendations.

Experiential learning depicts a learning environment in which students are highly self-directed, self-motivated, problem-orientated, and able to draw on their experience. The study has highlighted the importance of an immersed experience of learning for gaining full advantage from experience-based learning. This experience of learning will facilitate greatest benefit where students are prepared, interested and able to engage and capture value from the learning experience. The findings of this study lead to a second implication for practice, namely, the importance of engaging with a range of learning styles and abilities among a diverse group of learners. The range of qualitatively different ways in which learning was experienced on the Programme may well be illustrative of the variance in prior learning experience of each participant.

With regard to experiential learning, and in particular Kolb's ELC, a gap that has been highlighted in this study, exists in the initial conceptualisation of the model. There is no mention of the importance of the learning context and environment in facilitating experiential learning. In Kolb's initial work on experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), there is no mention of the role of the learning context or environment,

and consequently, one could make the assumption that all learning occurs in an optimal context and environment, or that this factor does not impact experiences of learning.

The final area related to implications for practice is that of entrepreneurship education. The use of experiential learning as a tool for teaching entrepreneurship is not a new approach. This study has served to support prior research in this area (for example, Dhliwayo, 2008; Sherman et al., 2008) and to emphasise further the importance of contextualising learning in a social context that is relevant to the student, and that takes account of the diversity of students' prior learning experiences (Barkatoolah, 1989; Moon, 2004).

Entrepreneurship education needs to be designed to give opportunities to students to experience learning from an immersed experienced (encapsulating the second two categories of description). This design involves offering activities aimed at experiences which enable internalisation and taking action, opportunity recognition, mindset development, and actions to exploit opportunity.

8.3 Implications for Future Research

The findings presented in this study have created a number of possibilities for future research. Presented below are four such opportunities.

8.3.1 The Learning Style Inventory and Entrepreneurial Education

The Learning Style Inventory (LSI) (Kolb & Fry, 1975), an extension of the Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, illustrates the ways in which individuals approach learning based on the elements of the ELC. The LSI illustrates four distinct learning styles:

- *Converger* – core strength is the application of ideas;
- *Diverger* – core strength is creativity and imagination;
- *Assimilator* – core strength is creating understanding and building theories, and
- *Accommodator* – core strength is carrying out plans (Kolb, 1985).

A research opportunity that has implications with regard to programme and curriculum design, and which would build upon this study, would be to link the LSI's styles of learning to experiences of learning. Building upon the argument that the ELC is interrupted at the point of reflective observation, it would be valuable to understand what kind of approach to learning is associated with high levels of reflective observation. This could have impact upon student selection for entrepreneurship education programmes that use an experiential learning theory, as well as for programme design. Such research would be of value in its ability to further enhance programme design and individualized learning pathways for students with varied learning backgrounds and learning styles.

8.3.2 Drivers of an Immersed Approach to Learning

An immediate and accessible extension of this study would be to identify among the pool of 80 participants those who exhibited an experience of learning in the Programme that can be regarded as an immersed approach to learning. Given the phenomenographic approach of pooling data to gain insight into the 'collective context of the voices' (Booth, 2001, p. 172), the individual voices are submerged in the aggregated data, and as such, this study has not been able to delve into the reasons why particular participants experienced learning on the programme in different ways. However, a fresh round of data scrutiny and analysis could be done in order to begin

to illuminate approaches to learning from individualised case studies within the growing tradition of researching factors that drive success rather than factors that drive failure (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

8.3.3 Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Building on the work around entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention (Cooper et al., 2004), additional research could examine programmes of entrepreneurship education that build these characteristics. A quantitative approach could be followed using instruments that measure self-efficacy (see McGee, Peterson, Mueller, & Sequeira, 2009).

8.3.4 The Role of Prior Learning Experience and Experiences

The current study has raised the issue of prior learning, learning experience and experiences as a barrier to effective experiential learning. Future research, especially within the South African context, could focus on this issue, and in particular the inequality in primary and secondary school educational experiences and its impact on entrepreneurial outcomes. This would build upon work related to the recognition of prior learning, in particular the work of Harris (1999) and Starr-Glass (2002).

8.4 Final Remarks

This study has investigated students' experience of an experiential learning approach to entrepreneurship education in South Africa. It has clearly supported prior studies advocating a constructivist approach to teaching and learning entrepreneurship. In developing programmes of learning that draw on experience as the basis for learning, the following caution from Dewey (1938, p. 25) is suggested; 'the belief that all

genuine education comes about through experience, does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative’.

9 References

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Appendices

Appendix A – Sample Focus Group Questions

The questions below are a sample of questions asked at the focus group interviews.

- Considering all the programme activities you have participated in thus far, how would you describe your experience of the Foundation's Programme?
- Which programme activities have stood out for you, and why?
- Year Equip only – given the gap of the last 6 months – describe your experience of Safari.
- What contributions are your facilitator, programme officer and mentor making to your learning?
 - What is their essential contribution?
 - What should they keep doing, as it really promotes your learning?
- Of the huge stream of experiences, what guides you in deciding what to log in your learning journal?
- How does keeping your learning journal make a difference in your work?
- What would you say to someone else if they asked you why you bother to keep a learning journal?
- What would you miss out on if you didn't keep a learning journal?
- How would that make a difference to the benefit you derive from this programme?
- Describe an instance of where you have applied learning from the programme to a situation outside the programme.
 - With what effects / benefits?

- If you were not on this programme, what skills and capacities would you not have developed?
 - How would that have made a difference?
- What have you learned from your participation in the programme that you value or think creates value?
- How has your participation in the programme changed your competency with respect to being entrepreneurial?
 - And how is that making a difference in your work?
 - And how is that improving your confidence?
- What have you each noticed about one another that tells you people are learning from this programme?
- Given that I am interested in gaining a full understanding of the Programme, what else should I be asking you about that I haven't yet and that you haven't yet told me about?

Appendix B – Example of Focus Group Transcript

Below is a verbatim transcript of a focus group interview.

Researcher: Right. So welcome to this focus group. Welcome and thank you all very much for agreeing to participate. What I'd like to do, just starting on my left, if you'd introduce yourself, give me your name, what you're studying, and which university you're studying at.

P1: I am Participant 1. I'm studying Bachelor of Accounting Science at Wits [University of the Witwatersrand].

P2: I'm Participant 2, studying BCom [Bachelor of Commerce] Accounting at UJ [University of Johannesburg]..

P3: My name is Participant 3 and I'm studying Actuarial Science at Wits [University of the Witwatersrand].

P4: My name is Participant 4 and I'm studying BCom [Bachelor of Commerce] Economics and [inaudible 00:43*] at UJ [University of Johannesburg]

Researcher: Great, thank you. Just considering all of the programme activities that you've participated in this far, how would you describe your experience of the Foundation's programme?

P4: For me personally I think one way that I would describe my experience with the different sessions that we've had is that it's very inspiring. And I think I also this in my survey that the challenges, how do I make it practical, you know, especially discovery sessions – sometimes I feel like I wish we will do something more practical, but otherwise I leave the place inspired and in two weeks most of the things dissolve and, you know, dissolve away from work at school with such things. But, so

I [carry - unclear 01:40*] a lot at the end of the day, but I sometimes wish that discovery sessions will change form in terms of not just being a discussion session but also something practical, you know. Ja [Ja – Afrikaans word for ‘yes’].

P3: I think I’ve learned a lot from the discovery sessions like, in terms of like from high school and I didn’t like working in groups because I felt like you know if I do something then I know it’s done properly. But since we’re working in such a group where everybody has similar characteristics, everybody is innovative, everybody is inspired, everybody is willing to get where they want to be. So working in a group like that you feel good and you know if you give someone a dedicated task to someone, they’re going to do it properly and you don’t need to worry about it. And like for each discovery session, when you leave there, inside you’re not the same person when you came in because you’ve learned something more. And like you said with the whole being able to apply, you want to apply it more, be more practical and stuff – I think it would be better like leaving, having the theory of like time management and market research and stuff, and trying to use it in your life, trying to do it yourself – I think you’ll learn more. It’s like taking someone’s – if you can’t figure out something and you take someone else’s answers for it, then you understand it immediately but you’ll never remember. If you struggle through it yourself you will remember it forever. And I think that is why they don’t make it so practical because you’re supposed to use it yourself, and I think that is what like, um, helps me a lot, what I take from all the discovery session is that I learn a lot from it and I try to apply it in my everyday life, and working in a group is now for me better than working by myself because everybody has different ideas, everybody has different opinions – and they’re all great, not just mine, and that is what I learn for it and what I take from it.

P2: I agree with Participant 3 and Participant 4 about discovery sessions being inspirational and informative. But then I want to comment on the relationship sessions even more, because I think they do make an impact – like you get to open up with Facilitator T, she’s actually quite good at what she does. And she doesn’t make you feel like – she’s more of a supportive type of character, that she gives some sort of availability that you can always speak to her whenever you feel like speaking to someone. And she just, she doesn’t close up, even on a personal level she’s there for you. You find yourself reaching into things that you wouldn’t have reached into, like within yourself spiritually, personally and emotionally. .And, ja [Ja – Afrikaans word for ‘yes’], I think they’ve been quite helpful.

P1: For me personally in terms of the programme looking from last year and this year, the main difference is that it’s more focused, I think. I think you can see a direct correlation in terms of what you talk about and you’re supposed to be doing – because if you look at your discovery sessions in terms of us doing retail, if you look from one until where we are now, if you had followed, basically it’s a blueprint, if you had followed that you should be ideally in a position where you say you begin to see success. I think it’s designed like that. I don’t necessarily think it’s about going out and discovering – I think they’re showing you a basic blueprint, go to implement this, and then later on because you would have – I think that’s where the practical aspect comes in, if you tie up the discovery session and what you actually do. The retail business is meant to be the practical; later on is where you can actually spend more by your own. I think for now it’s sort of like you’re assisted, you’ll be given a crutch, walk, walk along with us – and then later on, because, you see, they expect you to take that as your practical experience and then later on take what you’ve learned there and use it for whatever else you might want to implement in the future.

So for me I think the main difference and what I like this year it's more focused, you can actually see what you're doing, you can see where you're going, ja [Ja – Afrikaans word for 'yes'].

P4: Just on the relationship session as well, I think I agree with Participant 2, it's very important. It's very important because when you walk our relationship session, for us it's Facilitator T – you remember that you are a Fellow, that you were selected because people believed that you can actually do something. And you walk out of there wanting to have more time management, and, you know, it's almost like time to reflect, you know, with someone directing your reflection, and I really, really enjoyed that. It's actually really helped me a lot this year because I've usually been a multiple participator in many things, and it helped me cut down and refocus, you know, which has been a very, very vital thing for me.

P3: Also on the relationship sessions, like if you're struggling at varsity feeling demotivated, thinking you know you're going to lose the scholarship, you're going to lose the, you're going to fail and things like that. After, like the relationship session is like a reminder that, you know, everybody [falls/forced - sounds like 07:15*] to speak about it, but you were selected for a reason. It's not like they selected you because they thought you'd be able to become an entrepreneur or do great things – they knew you are able to do great things. So the relationship sessions are a constant reminder of why they selected you. So they're there to speak about your problems and assist you where they can, to take those problems away, so that you feel better at the end of the day, you feel motivated and you know that you feel once again I know I was selected, I must overcome these problems and these obstacles and whatever – and it's just part of this whole learning process through varsity, through the entrepreneurship programme. And you must know that, not even, you can't say I

hope I get through it, you must know that you are going to because you were selected because you can do it, not because they hope you can do it.

P4: I just want to ask you guys, in terms of, you know when we're together it's very profound, it's awesome, there's a lot of energy and we believe that, yes, we can do it. When you step out, I just want to know from you guys, what do you do to keep that going?

P3: There's actually a guy in my area that wants to start a business and everything. He didn't know that I was on this programme, and he's been looking for something like this. His name is Shane [pseudonym]. He's started many businesses but all of them failed because he doesn't have the direction like we do. Like if we had to try it it would probably last longer if, or like be very successful, but it wouldn't fail hopelessly. So he came to me and he was just speaking to me about it and I showed him my first year file and he went through it and he was like ver(y) – like his eyes lit up and his face was glowing – like he's wanted every Saturday since he spoke to me he sits with me and like wants me help him like go through the file and teach him how to do market research and how to manage his time because – and that is what like showed me that I actually learned something, because you're like, you never get to apply it, like you said, you never get to apply what you know, apply what you learn. And when I was talking to this guy, it made me feel better because then I knew I learned something as well. So like even till now, every Saturday from like in the afternoon or at night or on a Friday, one day over the weekend we'll sit for about two or three hours just speaking about what he can do; he'll give me his business plan, we'd go over it, I'll tell him what he must do different, and he'll give me his ideas ask me my opinions on it, and stuff like that. So it's like what you do with it is it totally depends on the person itself – are you going to show someone else, like tell

people what you learned and inspire them to do the same, or are you going to keep it to yourself and like start a big business and help other people? It totally depends on the person itself – so if you're very outspoken you can speak to other people, but if you're not, start your own business and get people, do like to decrease the unemployment rate in South Africa and stuff, because that's what the point of this whole thing is. So that is what like I feel, I feel like this – I like doing this on a weekend – like just sitting for two hours with this boy and just speaking to him because it makes me feel like, oh, I know what I'm talking about, and I don't just walk out of these sessions as like – oh, it's another session today, I'm walking out and I haven't learned anything. So that is what keeps me on my toes, speaking to him and telling him now this what you do, do this and whatever and then next week show me how you applied what I've taught you.

P2: And I think like what Facilitator R said the other time about not being selfish about it, just share it with other people. Because then you tend to think Fellows are the only people that can relate to our way of thinking and everything. But I get to Res [Residence] and I speak to my friends. Like I take every discovery session, whatever – because you get excited after discovery and then you get to Res [Residence], you can't keep quiet about it. And I start speaking to my friends about it, I start sharing everything about it, and I found that they'd show interest in the things that you actually have to say, and then they get inspired as well. And it gets to a point where as soon as I get a bit demotivated they like that [pillar - sounds like 11:40*] that comes back and reminds me – in like: what did you say that other day about that other thing? Ja [Ja – Afrikasns word for 'yes'], I think it can work, it's working for me. So it keeps the excitement going outside of discovery session, but everywhere else where I go.

Researcher: Given the gap of the last six months, describe your experience of Safari.

P4: Okay, I'm going to talk about one specific – there was one concept that you kept speaking about – about being present. And, wow, it was a very enlightening concept, you know, because I looked back, I reflected a lot, especially that night where we were alone. And I discovered that I actually was not present even in just in wonderful experiences in my life. I never, I don't know, enjoyed being in a specific place, being in a challenge or whatever it was – and this was affecting me more than I thought, because when I began to look at even my future goals, you know, wanting to become an entrepreneur and make a difference even in South Africa, you know, I felt like I was never present in this moment to say I need to just start with the small steps – so I couldn't see the small steps to get into the bigger picture because I wasn't present now, you know – so for me, since then I've been learning to be present and not undermine small beginnings and small steps and just investing in myself, like right now. Ja [Ja – Afrikaans word for 'yes'].

P3: The Safari was a great experience for me. I mean, I'm one person who can't live without technology, and that is why I thought, like I got there and I thought it's going to be a holiday and everything – and then it was put your cell phones in your bags, no one's having cell phones, no one's having this, we're sleeping outside and things. And that's what made me scared. And this whole thing with being present was like forget about the [inaudible 13:49*], well, you're here now, you are here and you're going to make the most of it. And once we'd done that, like writing what you – I don't, I'm not a person to express my feelings on paper, I would rather speak about it than write it. But I just felt like once we started writing everything in our work books, that is what helped me a lot – like whether it was drawing a picture or

writing how I felt – because I knew no one else is gonna -. Like when you speak to someone you leave out some things, either because it's going to offend the person or you're going to feel embarrassed by telling them something, whatever. But whatever you write down – like they said it's going to be confidential, so you can write down whatever you want to, exactly how you feel. And like the whole journey up the mountain, I didn't think I was going to make it at all, because I'd never, I have been on a hike before but not one as hectic as that one. I was the last to finish but I finished – and that was the thing. And that, the whole journey up the mountain – once you finish something like that, once you struggle through it you realise what you were supposed to learn from it. And what I learned from that was like I thought the whole way up the up was going fine, and, but going down wasn't. And like in life you always, everybody likes getting better and better and better, richer, wealthier – you know, having the best of everything, but no one likes falling down. Just like that was what that experience of having – like that is what it showed me. Climbing up the mountain was good but going down wasn't – and that is just how life is, and that is how I see it. Like even in a business, you're going to have your ups and you're going to have your downs – but as long as you get to the end and you finish it successfully – no one can take that away from you. No one – you can't even explain the feeling afterwards to anyone; someone has to experience it for themselves. And that was like we were given that opportunity to experience it, no one else has, and that is why like you tell people – I went on a 16 hour hike – and they're like, Oh, how could you do that, and whatever. But then they don't understand, like you explain to them but it's like this, you can compare it to life and whatever – they won't understand, they have to do it themselves. So that for me is like something that I apply to my life till now, is that I know I'm going to have ups and I know I'm going to have downs. But like the

whole time I was on the mountain and climbing down and stuff, I thought I wasn't going to make it, I wasn't going to make it. But I made it, and that is how I think like exams, if I fail I look at the positive side of it rather instead of the negative, saying, no, I will pass, I will come out successful at the end – because I'm just still at the bottom now, but I will get to the top again.

P1: For me I think in general it was a just a metaphor in terms of when they like explain – because, I mean, when you think safari you think what you see in the movies. And when they explained it from the point of a journey, you know, I think for me it was – the most valuable part for me, I've always been a person who reflects a lot, but like I think after this, like since then my reflections have been more critical, and I think I've become more fair towards myself because I think at times you reflect on what you should have done and what you could have done, and you like become so harsh on yourself. But I think with the safari I've learned to be, to understand that as humans, as a person you will falter along the way; it's not going to be like faultless, it's not going to be perfect, you know. So I think for me that's where the biggest aspect has changed – the way I reflect on, the way I see things. The way I see myself is more, I think I've become more like fair, you know. I mean, I look -. I think I'm more reasonable towards myself and I think that's the biggest lesson I took out of the safari.

P2: Well, with me, I'd say the majority of the time at the safari it felt like torture more than anything else – in the sense that it didn't help as well being new, you know. Like you weren't used to many of the people and then you're being put in a new environment on top of that, and then you're told to reflect. It felt like a whole lot of things were being done forcefully. But then what I learned is that I realised I was that type of person who doesn't recognise a good thing while I still have it. And then

only afterwards, because I could only start appreciating the safari when I got back – and was like, wow, the stars are so close and so many things went well, I learned so much about myself. And in terms of reflection it taught me that it really does work. And just going back and seeing the bad things and trying to figure out plans on how to sort them out and solve whatever problems that you come across and just believing in myself I think, ja [Ja – Afrikaans word for ‘yes’]. But the most important lesson is that I should appreciate moments when we have them, like just being present at that point in time and trying to find good in any situation instead of judging it generally and saying it’s bad and I’m just going to refrain from it.

Researcher: Okay, thank you. What essential contribution has your facilitator or programme officer or mentor made towards your learning?

P1: Well, okay, from, I think for me personally I think this year, the biggest difference is that the people we’re dealing with. I don’t know, maybe I think in terms of Facilitator R and Facilitator T, I think they’re not really from a business perspective, and I think at times like in the one session Facilitator R said we’re so consumed in being the best, being in the spotlight, you know, being seen, like being the go-to man like you know. And I think for me what’s significant about them is that I think honestly they just showed, like especially Facilitator R, I think it’s that particular Saturday, she showed me the realness of life, what’s actually happening out there. It’s not all about business, it’s not all about making that money. I think one thing that she touched upon was that we need to become servants; as much as we want to be leaders we need to be able to serve other people. And for me I think she brought back the human element that’s always detached from whatever we’re doing. I think it also taught like to value people that are next to you, because a lot of the times you think you can do this by yourself – I want to do this for me, you know – but at

the end of the day what are the consequences of you becoming rich – I mean, you could be hurting 10 000 people in your quest to be rich, and so I think for me she brought back the realness of life in general.

P3: Last year we had Facilitator J as our programme officer, who like handled the whole programme for us and everything. And that was a great experience, he's a very intelligent man, very business orientated and he helped us a lot, he helped us understand the concepts and all the work that we need to do, very well. But like this year, we couldn't relate with Facilitator J as we can with Facilitator R – Facilitator R is more, like, you know she's younger, we relate with her a lot more because she's like us. And like Participant 1 has said, we all know this and you need to work like a peasant to live like a king – and that is what she's taught us – like Participant 1 has said, like don't like work for the money, work because you're passionate about it, because you want to do it. And then you reap greater rewards at the end of it. Like even you can rather make a little money or be less successful but be happy in what you're doing and be passionate about what you're doing than be extremely rich but dread waking up every morning. That is what she teaches us – so we come to the discovery sessions with that in our heads, knowing that it's not about the money, it's about the experience, the learning experience. Whether we become successful or not, it doesn't matter as long as we've learned something. That is what Facilitator R has taught us. So that is the difference, like the difference from first year to second year – so we've become a lot more mature. Like when we just come to varsity we all think about getting our degree, making money and living the dream, having a car, having the house, everything. But Facilitator R has taught us it's not about that. It will be about that eventually, but the experience is what matters, what you learned from it, what you take from it and how you like use what you know to help other people as

well. Because then the reward is greater at the end, and we're not talking about monetary but like helping other people – you feel better than knowing that you helped someone than helping no one and just helping yourself – it doesn't feel as great as it would be just helping, like knowing you help like 10 000 other people look at things the way you do look at life, look at life the way you do. Like Facilitator R has showed us all that, and now if we show another 15 people and those people show another 15, it will just get bigger and bigger and bigger and people will start looking at the benefits of working and the benefits of learning and experiencing new things, and stuff like that and not just making money. Because it's better just to be happy in what you're doing and know why you're doing something and know that you're helping other people than being alone and having everything. That is what I take from our facilitators.

P4: I really love how they direct the discovery sessions and allow us to just really be verbal and to think, you know. It's not like a one-way teaching place; it's really everybody gets involved and we start thinking and you know that, ja [Ja – Afrikaans word for 'yes], I've contributed, I actually can contribute, you know. And for me it's been important because I think something also that I sometimes need to remind myself is why am I an Allan Gray Fellow? The requirements that were on that form that we had, that it's actually what Allan Gray is looking for are servants to serve Southern Africa, to serve Africa, so that we can build up Africa. So sometimes it's very important to be reminded that it's not just about you, it's not just about yourself, but it's really about helping other people, so it's been very important in that way, I ja [Ja – Afrikaans word for 'yes].

P2: For me personally in terms of the facilitators, Facilitator R to me is more of the face of the Foundation, I haven't thought of her like on a personal level. But then

when I think of her, she depicts what the Foundation stands for and she personifies it in a way. So like she stood for all the good things that we've mentioned about the Foundation, and it hasn't been more of a personal thing for me that I had a personal experience with her in that she personally touched me, but she was more of a medium in which the Foundation actually to me.

Researcher: Thank you. Of the stream of experiences that you've had or participated in in the Foundation, what guides you in terms of deciding whether to record that in your learning journal?

P3: For me, like if I've learned something that I've already heard before and whatever, like things that are common, things that everyone like to share and things like how to be successful and things you know like that, that is a normal thing, I wouldn't record something like that. For me when you hear something and you have that in your head where you say – wow. That is what I record. Like something that really touches me, something that really makes me say or makes me think say like or makes me think – that is what I record. So it's not everything and maybe I can come out of a discovery session and not write anything in the journal because I know that stuff or stuff I've learned already, stuff that I've tried to implement already. What I put in my journal is things that I haven't really implemented before, something that is going to be new to me – like so I'll write about if I had to implement it, like what does it hold for me in the future now that I've learned something brand new, and with everything else that I have learned, how is it going to impact me? Like the BGS [Business Government & Society] sessions, for instance, those are very interesting because the people speak to us about different entrepreneurs, speak to us about their experience, their downfalls, when they were the most successful, the advantages, disadvantages of being in their field – and that is what – like the BGS [Business,

Government & Society] sessions is what I reflect on most, and discovery sessions on what I learn from most.

P4: I think it's the same with me, that when there is a light that goes on, that's when I would write. And sometimes because I've got my personal journal and I've got the Allan Gray journal, and for me the Allan Gray journal, for me it's my entrepreneurial journey, and for me it's to show the Foundation how what they aim to do is working and how it's not working – so I'd write both negatives and positives and how I overlook the negatives and positives. So usually I would have written positive things only, but I think this year I've just learned to just say I didn't understand this, but now I understand it. You know, so I just write both the negative and the positive that I'm going through the Foundation with in my entrepreneurial [journal/journal - unclear 28:16*].

P2: I struggle with journaling. I still struggle. I don't, I haven't found motivation to actually write in the journal, except submission dates [laughter in voice] at the moment. I'd be lying if I said I'm motivated. I haven't been one to journal, to journalise. I've been one to think about things, [pray - unclear 28:40*] about things and just move on. I'm more of an internal person, I like to keep things to myself, especially things I feel like they're too precious, I like to keep them to myself. And journaling, I find myself writing things that might just be obvious, it's like the person who reads it would think I know this, and I don't really let everything out, so I haven't found that motivation to write in the journal.

P1: I think for me personally, I think it's been like, like it's been hard because I think a lot of time you channel to channel to write your journal what you think the Foundation would like to hear. Sometimes, honestly like you go to a discovery session and you just did not get anything out of it, you were just bored the whole time

– and you can't really write that – you think, hey, okay, you know. So what I've done, I think I haven't journaled a lot, but when I've journaled I think I've journaled more, not just like from an entrepreneurial perspective but just in general. So I mean, if I'm thinking and something heads on the news or something I think this, I mean, if this affects our journey there – you know, even if it's indirectly like I'll journal or something like that – like I think for me it's become more of a personal thing than just about entrepreneurship all the time – like what have I learned. And I think sometimes, I don't know, but I think well, I mean, I've spoken to people and I think sometimes people tend to force things – you know, that's why I'm saying the whole channeling of writing in a certain way – I think sometimes it's okay to just have nothing to say. I mean, I don't like really commenting for the sake of commenting, I think it should be necessary to comment.

P3: Well like the way I look at the reflective journal, it's just like you said, my reflective journal has become my personal journal or as you said it, you separate the two. But like I put everything I learn in there, whether it's entrepreneurial or emotional, or something like that – because if it affects me it affects the programme because I am in the programme – so that is how I look at it, it's I reflect on my life in that journal. And I don't write, like I said, I don't like writing things down. Like now this is fine for me, speaking about it and stuff, so I record my things, I record it just like with a tape recorder I record, I just speak – speak one way, say what I need to say and what I have learned and things like that, because I like speaking. Like writing things down and stuff, it becomes tedious afterwards because then you're looking for things to write, you want to sound professional, you want it to sound very like adult because you know someone is going to read it. Whereas when you're speaking, you're speaking things that come straight to your mind and you just speak about it.

And that is what I do when I reflect, it's my personal like, you carry a tape recorder wherever – say you're at varsity and you walked out of a lecture and you learned something or didn't understand something – what does it mean for you? Why don't you just speak about it while you're walking to your next lecture? So that's how I look at it.

Researcher: Can I just ask you a question. So if you attend a discovery session and conceivably you don't learn anything from that, you found it boring – what can you learn from that experience?

P1: I think they are not the same I think. I think because some –. Like I think maybe that's why this is also important, this whole process of like now like basically this is like reflection. Because I think it sort of helps, I think personally like it helps the Foundation to see things differently, like where can we change maybe. Like how can we accommodate more people like you know. So for me I think if at that moment in time if I feel like I didn't learn anything, I think I won't dwell in that moment for too long, you know, because I think it will be probably a waste of time being there, not learning anything, oh, and then reflect and like be obsessed about, okay, what is in –. I think it's more, I think it's like they were talking about the present moment, I think it's more important to be in the present, and there's always something else which you've learned – well, and there's something else that you can learn – so, I mean, if they spoke about like marketing and I really didn't like that part, I'll probably go on the net, just Google a couple of journals or something, and like read something else related to marketing because you can always relate to searches, be something else that then does channel me to find it interesting. I really don't dwell in like negative experiences, we can say that.

P3: Commenting on what Participant 1 has said like you can, like I think it's possible to walk out of a discovery session and not feel like you learned anything from it because maybe you've already known it or you found it boring. It's like you lectures, you have your favourite subjects and you have your least favourite subjects. You're obviously going to learn more in your favourite subjects because you enjoy it, you're there, you're present. So if we in discovery sessions and you like said you don't like don't like and we're doing marketing now and for three – all you're going to think, ah, I don't like marketing, it's three hours of marketing. And you see next week, oh, but we're going to do like how to overcome like problems in like your business or whatever, if you face these problems how you're going to overcome them, and that involves a lot of speaking and things like that – that's what I like. So that will be, I'll learn a lot more from that because I enjoy that. But you can't do that without knowing anything about marketing, if you know what I mean. So in marketing you listen but what you learn after that, you're going to learn a lot more, because I enjoy the section [inaudible 34:40*], you know what I mean – but that is both in marketing. So it's not like you can say you learned nothing from it, it's like maybe you will learn from it but, you know, you're looking forward to something else, something that's going to come after.

Researcher: Can you describe an instance where you applied learning from the programme to a situation outside of the programme?

P3: My situation would definitely be this guy that I am helping, because he's started his own business now, buying meat and actually transporting the meat to different people's houses, taking orders at their houses and dropping it off for them. And I helped him do that, and it's been successful so far, he's told me he hasn't had a problem so far, and if does he phones me wherever I am. He actually wanted to come

with me to one of the discovery sessions as well, just to see how it is. So that has been my one biggest experience so far, was helping this guy, because he's now started his own business and it's successful for the first time. So I feel like I've helped him because every other time before he met me he's been struggling with it. And it just shows that knowing something about market research, knowing something about advertising, time management, and putting your things down on paper before implementing it and looking at what your advantages and disadvantages are, looking at SWOT analysis, and, ja [Ja – Afrikaans for 'yes'], things, all these analysis, and I showed him this and it did help him and that is why – like it's amazing – and that is the one big experience that I like outside of the Foundation that know that I've learned something, because I've learned from it, he's learned from it, and the success, you can see the success as well.

P4: For me personally I think it was the reflection part of things where I think I was on this: I've got to, I have to go, I have to go, keep going, keep moving and I'm going to do well in my school work, I'm going to do well in this. And I guess on the way I forgot why, why I wanted to do all these things, why am I going and you know the whole -. There was a lot of tension inside of me and I kept doing a lot of things, doing a lot of things. And when I went to the relationship sessions with Facilitator T, you know she taught me some strategies on time management and I always thought I didn't have enough time, so I really did feel like I was inefficient, inadequate in being a fellow, at my academics, in my participation at university. So just basically I felt inadequate in all the areas. But what I started doing was doing myself and being myself, and just recognising that I do have enough time and I just need to take some things that are not important in my life and just start doing myself and relaxing. And I think where I'm at right now is that I feel like I can start being practical and being

adequate. So for me it's been a struggle and then it really helped me being on the programme and seeing how other Fellows are actually coping and they're doing well, and they're actually also struggling and I'm not like the only one in the boat. And hearing other young people having ideas pushes me, really it pushes me, ja [Ja – Afrikaans for 'yes'].

P1: Well, there was a time this year, like honestly like I mean, I spoke to a couple of friends when I was like I want to quit this accounting thing. This is not, like honestly, this is not for me, I don't want to do this, I've had enough of this, you know. But then I think we forget, like she's just mentioned we forget why we set goals, what the actual goal was, you know, and I think it came down to that where it became, if I could say like manual labour, something that you do once and you just know. And I think I started to reposition my goals, looking, realigning my goals, looking why do I want to do this. And I think we've done, even last year I think we did that with goal setting, and I revisited the file, looked at some of the stuff from this year – and I realised that my priorities weren't straight anymore. I mean, the session with Facilitator R even helped us, especially the session with being, about being servants and why we do things. I think that actually opened up – I start(ed), I got out of the whole, I mean, the rat-race now and I started doing me, you know. I started doing the basics I think and taking it a day at a time. I think a lot of times we live for when I'm a CA [Chartered Accountant] and I'm making this money, wow – ja, ja, ja [Ja – Afrikaans for 'yes']. So I think for me my goals have changed, the way I've set my goals has changed. So for me I think that's the biggest aspect that the Foundation come in – the difference where like we have implemented what I've been told and what I've learned in my everyday life, ja [Ja – Afrikaans for 'yes'].

P2: With me, before the Foundation it was a thing of I had my dreams, I knew I was going to be a CA [Chartered Accountant] and just work for an accounting firm. And you think, fine, I'd like to live this kind of a lifestyle, but then you don't know how exactly to get there and all the possibilities. So what the Foundation has done was it opened, let me say my eyes, to a whole lot of different things – like a different way of thinking, that you don't have to focus at one thing at a time, it is possible to actually dream about different things and it is accomplishable. And another thing was that I was surrounded by people who are doing the same thing, so [inaudible 40:30*] accounting students you just think of BCom [Bachelor of Commerce] Accounting and that's it, then you think of what firm you're going to work for. But now being exposed to people doing different kinds of courses, you actually think – oh, wow, there's Actuarial Science out there, and these people you can actually implement business with your career and people actually expanding their lives in different ways. So it restructured the way I set my dreams and my goals. And I feel like now I've got a more structured goal, and I can actually set years and timeframes to the things that I want to accomplish. It's not just a thing that one day I'm going to be a CA [Chartered Accountant], but I know that maybe in five years I can accomplish this and in 10 years the other thing.

Researcher: Thank you. How has your participation in the programme changed your competency to be entrepreneurial?

P1: I think, I don't know, but for me since last year I think the biggest difference was when you walk into a shop and you already see an opportunity in that store or you see things differently. I think that's the biggest thing. Honestly, I think there's a lot of people out there, they just don't have the opportunity that we have to be actually shown these things. They have the same potential, the same abilities or even

more, but they just don't have the opportunity to show that. And I think for me my mindset, I think that's the biggest change. I think my mindset has been channeled into looking or being more aware of my surrounding in terms of business opportunities or things I appreciate or things I like. I think for me that's the biggest thing. I think it starts with having an open mind – once you have an open mind, I think what you can do is unlimited, you just have to choose something, look at something and go with it, ja [Ja – Afrikaans for 'yes'].

P3: What the whole programme has done for me, like from first year we learned a lot of research, basically how to draw up like your market research, what you have to look at, your target market, lots of research, business plan and stuff like that – not doing anything practical as yet, just planning everything, putting everything on paper. And this year we're applying what we know. And what it's like from an entrepreneurial perspective what it has shown me is like you walk into a store and now like before, before the programme, like let's talk high school, you walk in there and you think, this guys so rich, look at the car he's driving and everything, and he started it himself and why can't I do this and things. Now after learning all this, like the Foundation has provided you with all these tools and now you walk into a store and like I can do something like this, I can do something, it's easy, I just have look for my target market, I have to get my suppliers, I have to do this, I have to do that, because it's all in your head now, it's structure in your mind – like before it wasn't structured at all, you didn't know where to start. The Foundation has told us where to start, what to do next, they have put everything in steps for us. So like today we went to Fruit & Veg City. Like the whole time I was there I was thinking why can't I do something like this? And there isn't an answer to that because you can. There is no way that you can't because you can – I mean, two people, two brothers started it and

they also, they didn't know they were going to do something like this but they did it. And we can also – and is how from what I've learned from an entrepreneurial perspective. Any shop I walk into, I try to analyse my mind, like how did they go about starting it? What market research did they have to do? What is their target market? – and stuff like that. And then once you do that all the time, it like just, it opens your mind to a world of new things – like you can do it as well, if you put it down on paper and actually structure everything, you can start your own business. Whether it's going to be successful or not you don't know, but the risk is what makes it exciting. And someone who took the risk and made it, motivates you even more, like the Coppin brothers, Brian and Mike [entrepreneurs in a case study], they were there – like when we read this case study, they were unsuccessful in the start but became very successful at the end. So if they can do it, so can I and so can anyone else who's provided with the right tools, and that's the opportunity that we've been given – so we should apply it. And because we've been given that opportunity it means that we can do it as well. So that's how I look at things.

P4: I think it's Anthony Robinson who talks about the power of questioning. And I think before I got to the Foundation I wanted to become an entrepreneur. But when I'm thinking, okay, how can I? What can I? What's the need? There was still the question of, am I capable of actually doing it? And I think being on the Foundation has changed the kind of questions that I ask – is no longer the "I" aspect of it of: can I actually become an entrepreneur? Am I capable of doing that? But it's more now I'm thinking about how can I do it? How am I going to do it? This is because of the BGS [Business, Government & Society] sessions, when you hear people's life-stories of where they come from, how they do it. And I think the reason, sometimes, well, I needed to get the question answered was because, I mean, there's not much

motivation outside – you know, people are telling you, “You won’t be able to do that”, or “Who do you think you are, how can you do that?” So you are demotivated, and it was just blocking my mind in terms of am I capable of actually doing it. So for me it’s the mindset shift – it’s shifted from “Can I do it?” It’s not even about me; it can be done, so I must do it. But how do I identify? Okay, we learned about retail – what are the opportunities here, and it’s just really channeled my thinking and how I ask questions now. Ja [Ja – Afrikaans for ‘yes’].

P2: I agree with everyone, it was the mindsets. Because I was interested in what I can get out of it; it was always the benefits, the riches and everything – but now it’s more on the “how everything is done”. Before I actually thought what you can get out of it.

Researcher: What have you each noticed in other that you think illustrates that that person is learning from the programme? So you’ve identified yourself, but what have you seen in others?

P3: All our learning experiences are different. That is what I enjoy most about speaking like this is because like my view on what I’ve learned and what I take as exciting might be boring for someone else, like Participant 1, like he said just now, like he doesn’t like this or he doesn’t like that – sometimes he doesn’t learn anything. And sometimes if I feel like I haven’t learned anything – he has learned something. So maybe he can tell me what was his learning experience – like he did now with that easy learning experience was from what I maybe thought was boring. And I can tell him about what my learning experience was for what he thought was boring – and we can just build on that, like listening to what everybody has said today, I’ve learned a lot and like I’ll walk out of this, and like I said, like a discovery session, you don’t walk out the same person because now you know a lot more, but the thing is like

what you're going to do with it. So that is what like –. Like I didn't even think about anything that you have said today. I thought everybody's looking at it the same way I was – that is why this is open and I need to speak to the others as well – like what is like the same questions you've been asking us, I need to ask them, so that I can learn more – because it's no use me learning and keeping it to myself and thinking everybody's thinking the same like me and has learned the same things as I have. And like this has just shown me that around my thinking like that, like I need to listen to everybody and this here, like you learn so much more from other people's experiences than from your own.

P4: From the Fellows that I've an opportunity to actually like speak to from UJ [University of Johannesburg], I've noticed how they're getting so challenged to make it not just about themselves, and to think beyond just the job and the career, you know, and that really pushes me to have that kind of heart or to push whatever learning experience I'm having. And it's really been great to see how reaching out is becoming such a big, big thing for the Fellow that I've been speaking to. Ja [Ja – Afrikaans for 'yes'].

P1: I think people are pushing themselves now. I think the biggest shift, honestly when I started experiencing of people was after Fellow S left when he went to Harvard. You know people believe in themselves and I can do this, but I think after the whole Fellow S thing, I think I started to question myself – what am I doing now? I think that's what's happened. People have, I don't know, people are pushing themselves to do as much as they can, you know, things more effectively, you know, make a real difference. I think for me that's what I've notice with a lot our people now. I think people want meaning now behind like – and not just doing things for the

sake of doing. I think with everything they're trying to find meaning in what they're doing. So I think that's what I've noticed in a lot of the Fellows.

P2: I think as well in terms of people aren't doing things selfishly, because like you find that people come up with business ideas and they think of needs [inaudible 50:33*] on the other Fellows and they're able to call other people and say: What input can you have in this? Can you come and join me? I think you can actually contribute this kind of thing into this – instead of saying I can selfishly take it for myself and ignore all the other things I can learn from other people. But we're actually acknowledging each others potential and trying to form some sort of a forum and work together.

Researcher: Great. Thank you. Given that I'm interested in trying to get as full a picture and understanding of the programme as possible, what have I not asked you that I should be asking, and what have you not shared with me that you would like to and think I should know?

P4: I think that in the discovery sessions, I don't know if it's done throughout like all the years, but perhaps maybe at the end or at the beginning just a little reminder of the goals of why we are Allan Gray Fellows. You know, I think – like that session we had with Facilitator R where she was talking about it's not just about you – easily, easily we forget that, and it's just, okay, retail, retail, retail. But the biggest thing that I found that does inspire most people is when they realise they have the potential, they have the responsibility to do it not just for themselves. So if it would be incorporated somehow to always have a little time where it says – okay, what are the different issues that you've seen in South Africa and as an Allan Gray Fellow you think that we should think upon? And such things – they really drive us. They really drive us, even to do – for me, even to just do the retail thing better – says, oh, I've got

this opportunity, oh, this is my responsibility as an Allan Gray Fellow. So, ja [Ja – Afrikaans for ‘yes’], that’s something I would really love to see happening.

Researcher: Anyone else? Okay.

[END]

Appendix C – Example of NVivo Coding

[<Internals\FG Gauteng>](#) – § 3 references coded [1.67% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 0.21% Coverage

For me as a commerce student, the programme is very appealing because I can apply it to practically every subject that I do and every course that I do.

Reference 2 – 0.96% Coverage

Funnily enough, when I was doing my work experience at the National Empowerment Fund which focuses on funding small start-up companies and large corporate transactions, I found that I used quite a bit of my work from the initial Allan Gray camp and this year's folder. A lot of the processes that they go through about thinking about business – What's the size of the market? Who are the target, who is the target market? What are they selling? What's their unique selling point? All of that information actually did come up from that work we had already done so I found that quite useful and quite enlightening in terms of how do you evaluate an investment or potential business idea.

Reference 3 – 0.50% Coverage

In the contact sessions we sort of learn about all the things that we could face and all the aspects that you have to watch and think about before you start a business and how to approach it in the business models and stuff and then you hear from the people that have actually done it and gone through it and I think that just makes it so much more real to me.

[<Internals\FG Western Cape>](#) – § 1 reference coded [1.01% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.01% Coverage

To start a retail company you think distribution, logistics, how do you expand, you know? There's a lot behind the scenes to the actual, well let's put it this way, there's a business concept and then there's the business that has to be run and I think that Allan Gray is really, the programme has shown me a lot about there's a whole facet of business behind the business concept and I've, that's what I'm most fascinated in, how different business concepts use different business models to make that viable.

[<Internals/FG Eastern Cape A>](#) – § 5 references coded [9.88% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.63% Coverage

I talk about content I'm really referring to the stuff in the context sessions, I think it's made us focus on what entrepreneurship entails looking at the different aspects of entrepreneurship. For instance, when we think about it perhaps you just think about starting a business you wouldn't necessarily consider on the spot what, what this would involve and what things you need to consider and it's just basically made us focus on the right elements which we can learn from each other in a sort of structured way, because we know that at a specific week we discussing such a topic and then it focuses our attention on that.

Reference 2 – 2.99% Coverage

In terms of the content as far as I understand and as far as it has helped me personally or at least for the few months that I've been on the Foundation, I've got to realise that I've actually putting some of the things that I've actually learnt in school like at varsity, Management I'm putting some of the things much more, not really into practice but into much more broader perspective, because what we do now as Fellows, we get to interact with one another, we get to talk about the material and we get to actually understand and that is for me, is one of the best way of actually learning about it, you know, I wish you could do more as a foundation whereby we can actually get into doing more practical stuff and putting them into practice, I wish

that's what we could be doing, because we have the content, we understand the content, but I wouldn't want it to end up as just theory, it has contributed to me, I understand it, right now I don't remember some of the stuff, I'll only remember when I read the material you know what I mean, so I need something that will, that would be there that can grow in me, that's what I'm looking for.

Reference 3 – 1.27% Coverage

We've actually touched on the aspects that are important into developing that entrepreneurial skill, like we looked at risk, we looked at thinking logically we looked at other aspects such as like the business processes you know cost constraints, those are the real factors that are being faced by entrepreneurs, so to actually touch on those realistic factors was a highlight for me in terms of the content, because we actually touched on real matters that people will face out there.

Reference 4 – 2.73% Coverage

In terms of the BGS session I think it has contributed I don't know, significantly to me and to my understanding of entrepreneurship because like it is from what I'm, from my own observation it has been related from with the content or rather the material I used in the sessions, like I remember last time we spoke about risk and then on our first BGS session what the entrepreneur they think that's the CEO of iBurst, what he spoke about was significantly was, he touched on risk on how risk has impacted on his business decisions and how it, so it seems so relevant and like I said I need something more practical, so the idea of risk and taking, and taking more calculated risk has been, it actually it was sustained in me because I heard it from somebody, it wasn't just theory, it's seemed more practical, so the BGS session also helps transform to actually to facilitate that process you know of making what we learn in sessions to become more practical, because we hear from somebody who has actually applied those theories into practice.

Reference 5 – 1.27% Coverage

A lot of the knowledge that you got from the contact sessions will come back and you'll start applying what you've learnt, because, because you would you would've

know or at least gotten some idea about, about risk and when you think about it you will go back to what was said that day and for example one of the fellows was telling me that he got a copy of the BGS and I was saying he must give me that because you know that experience is you will be able to play back that experience.

[<Internals\FG Gauteng A>](#) – § 1 reference coded [1.08% Coverage]

Reference 1 – 1.08% Coverage

I agree with you that you're not at a disadvantage because it's a separate mindset, but the stuff we're covering is also included quite often in a Commerce degree and I think like Atlegang was saying that it assists them in the commerce function and it's been a concern to me that I feel sometimes I can't contribute as much, because I'm not, I haven't had that other knowledge and perhaps also my time demand is, you know, there's no overlap for me to come benefit from and I'm not sure how you would make it more science-orientated, the course material, because it's such a business function and I think, I feel for myself that it actually adds a lot of benefit to me, because it's like taking another course. It's getting something which I'm not covering in my actual academic course.

Appendix D – Sample Mind Map of Dominant Themes to Emerge

