

# Transformative Reflexivity: Teaching and Quality Enterprise Pedagogy

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## Research summary

In this paper, we examine with interest teaching and quality in enterprise pedagogy. This becomes pertinent as quality enterprise pedagogy lays the foundation for student development and empowerment. We have theorised by drawing on the concept of transformative reflexivity, as it necessitates an understanding of behaviour located within social and institutional contexts. At the empirical level, case studies of 3 graduate entrepreneurs and 3 academics provide a richer understanding of the phenomenon which we seek to explore. Our findings reveal that reflexivity which is constructively aligned-in-action provides a basis for quality enterprise teaching and learning. The contribution of this paper advances theory by providing a framework that can be used to guide enterprise pedagogy.

**Managerial summary:** Given the changing scene of university teaching, it becomes important that enterprise pedagogy has to be given the highest priority. The real notion is the lack of a framework that advances the right approach to quality enterprise pedagogy. In this study, we seek to address this gap by laying the foundations for effective teaching and quality enterprise pedagogy. Thus, the discussion which we pursue presents a sound framework for understanding student and teacher interactions. Hence, we aim to provide a novel but sophisticated approach to teaching and quality enterprise pedagogy.

*Keywords:* Teaching, enterprise pedagogy, learning outcomes, reflexivity, framework

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## 1. Introduction

To date, there is a growing interest in the quality learning and teaching. This becomes particularly important as concerns have been raised about the quality of teaching and learning across universities. Critics have pursued the narrative that teaching quality has been watered down by commercialisation initiatives across higher education. Another major reason has been a record increase in student participation rates, which has altered the various approaches to teaching delivery. One of the virtues of putting right such concerns is making explicit the standards needed for quality teaching and learning. We are more concerned with aspect of enterprise pedagogy which falls under the above narrative. This remains critical in the context that higher education institutions have failed to develop the skill and entrepreneurial competencies needed in the fast changing global market. Consequently, the present context demands an institutional-wide implementation which addresses the concerns and refutes higher education scepticism. Indeed, an approach in the right movement would be committed to addressing teaching effectiveness and delivery standards.

In a white paper on excellence and opportunity (DTI, 2000), the government makes repeated calls to encourage a culture of science for entrepreneurial start-ups, such that members of the society can take risks and exploit opportunities. To this end, the implication suggests that universities must contribute to the national economy by exploiting resources, opportunities and expertise. Consequently, since the commercialisation of ideas leads to the wealth and job creation, the weight lies on universities to pursue accelerated initiatives for teaching and quality of entrepreneurship in HE. This would imply establishing departments, centres and teaching groups that can support the creation and expansion of entrepreneurship (Galloway and Brown, 2002; Murray et al., 2018). Additionally, measuring the depth and quality of student entrepreneurial knowledge may not necessarily be correlated to the relative quality of the entrepreneurial programme, rather this can be linked to approaches designed to support a climate of effective enterprise teaching. Such solutions should narrow the gap by embracing innovative policies and procedures for student learning and the intended outcomes.

Of course, students may possess limits which may be beyond the tutor's reach; however quality teaching can close the gap by capitalising on such limitations. Together with the standard limitations which may affect student learning, quality enterprise teaching spontaneously supports student learning in developing their cognitive processes. This consists of the implementation of teaching methods which requires student to question and probe their cognitive capacities to their fullest. The process includes a greater focus on the following

priorities; student centred learning, recognition of student's prior learning, student employability, constructively aligned teaching outcomes and quality assurance.

To achieve these goals, universities will have to operate by providing the incentive structure which enhances enterprise teaching and programmes. Further along these lines, care must be taken to recognise that quality enterprise pedagogy is a function of the institutional-wide infrastructure (Vesper and Gartner, 1997; Biggs and Tang, 2011). As such, an outcome based approach which improves and enhances student learning and quality teaching is necessary. This approach should be designed to create a sense of direction which supports the extent to which enterprise pedagogy accelerates the quality of student business start-ups. How achievable this is, depends to a greater sum a model of teaching which encourages students to achieve intended learning outcomes. A model of this nature would reflect and permit the development of student entrepreneurship, which is critical to a deep approach to quality student learning.

Based on the foregoing, this paper takes an exploratory approach in investigating the role of teaching and quality enterprise pedagogy in HE. The data for this study draws on an in-depth empirical work focused on 6 distinct cases. In our approach, we introduce the concept of transformative reflexive pedagogy as it provides the foundations for shaping quality enterprise teaching and learning. In the respective cases, an understanding of quality teaching is explored through the lens of the respondents. In this vein, the insights are centred on two core questions:

RO1: How do students perceive quality teaching and learning pedagogy?

RO2: What is model of teaching encourages students to achieve intended learning outcomes?

The answers to these two sub-questions advance knowledge by contributing to the development of a best-in-class teaching and quality approach to enterprise pedagogy. Consequently, this paper provides a contribution to how HE institutions can support enterprise pedagogy by ensuring that students are prepared for the challenges of their unique environments. This includes the implementation of university wide policies and how they uphold quality teaching and learning. With this in mind, the article is divided in three parts; the following section sets the stage for quality enterprise teaching and the intended outcomes. The methodological section is then presented and the findings revealed. The final section brings these discussions to bear by linking these findings to our theoretical model in supporting teaching and quality enterprise pedagogy.

## **2. Laying the foundations for quality enterprise teaching**

Quality enterprise pedagogy is shaped by the wider institutional policies and procedures which shape it. Within HE, universities are tasked with ensuring conformity with best practice in developing student entrepreneurship. However, an examination of such procedures reflects the need for contemporary approaches to enterprise pedagogy (Copper et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2006). This approach demands eliminating any aspect of teaching which fails to provide a climate for transformative learning engagement. The earliest forms of enterprise pedagogy involved supporting and motivating student aspirations. This ranges from surface approaches to teaching which have been proven to be less productive, to initiatives which enhance intrapreneurship. Consequently, these approaches have failed to drive institutional-wide objectives that focus on entrepreneurship education as driver for wealth creation. In particular, such inadequacies have evolved from institutional cultures which are not focused on a strengthened entrepreneurial narrative.

Conversely, it can be debated that weak foundations within universities hinder the development of quality enterprise teaching and learning. To a large extent, the thrust of quality enterprise education is dependent on the type of pedagogical approach adopted and for whom. For instance, Fletcher (1999) found that the University of Sterling's graduate Enterprise programme had good start up rates but was aimed at student with start-up intentions. In a similar vein, HE institutions such as Babson College, USA and University of Twenty had higher start-up rates for their students as a result of an existing culture of entrepreneurial realisation which has been their strategic priority (Upton et al., 1995; Deakins, 2000; Galloway and Brown, 2000).

As the entrepreneurial culture is established within these institutions, it expands by ensuring that students are better equipped to pursue their own start-ups. Needless to say, the effectiveness of this approach depends also on the degree of expertise of the teachers. The adverse impact would always translate to inadequacies in delivery, as teaching impact may not necessarily be in line with set outcomes. This requires a substantial specialisation in the capacity of the educators tasked with providing knowledge. Nonetheless, in such contexts, it is important to unfold student conceptions of learning by supporting curriculum designers and teachers in providing the best optimal outcomes.

When students are supported with a creative learning process, they act according to their individual experiences and competencies (Etelapelto et al., 2013; Hero and Lindfors, 2019). In the long term, these characteristics are manifested in the choice of entrepreneurial decisions they make in real-world scenarios. However, the entrepreneurial journey begins by developing a set of approaches and programmes that define

these competencies. The opportunity for developing quality enterprise pedagogy and the need to adopt a consensual approach demands further investigation. We therefore suggest that creating quality teaching and quality enterprise programs will best be promoted through our transformative reflexive pedagogical model.

### **3. Understanding the Transformative reflexive pedagogy**

The problems of teaching and quality in enterprise pedagogy demands creating a unique climate which encompasses holistic student interactions. We believe that this has a strong impact on student learning. While some may see limitations to entrepreneurial learning from a student perspective, we argue that success expectation lies at the door step of the program design and approach. This presupposes an application of principles which tutors and program must adhere to. A key thrust of our transformative reflexive pedagogical approach lies in two levels; the first exists on a micro level focusing on the tutor who explores the need to reflect on ones key strengths, the willingness to collect student feedback and a continuous reflection of improved teaching. On the other hand, the second level exists on the macro level where the university's associated intervention creates an entrepreneurial culture. In order to understand this process, it is also important to focus on the interplay of both levels. Although the concept of reflexivity has often be misunderstood (Okely, 1992; England, 1994); we surmise that the transformative reflexive pedagogy induces introspection by allowing a scrutiny of teaching approaches. We therefore contend that the transformative reflexive pedagogy is the overall inclusive process which provides insights into the teaching approach and structure. In particular, the appeal of the transformative reflexive pedagogy lies in an attempt to achieve quality methods of teaching that an opportunity to probe the inner texture of adopted teaching practices. These skills can be developed to support effective and quality teaching

#### ***3.1 Micro level transformative reflexive pedagogy***

At the micro level approach, the transformative reflexive approach exists on the part of the teacher who provides the impetus for knowledge. A major characteristic of award winning enterprise teachers lies in their desire to reflect by collecting feedback on their teaching approaches (Dunkin and Precians, 1992; Biggs and Tang, 2011). This implies that they approach their teaching through a reflective interaction so that they might develop better. As the term reflection goes, it is a mirror through which one can make introspections and satisfactory outcomes. In relating this to enterprise pedagogy, the goal is to ensure that a reflexive introspection demands that content and delivery must be constructively aligned to achieve the best entrepreneurial outcomes. A further characteristic of the micro-level reflexive pedagogy is that teaching strategies have to be recognised such that it counterbalances any inevitability that may occur within the classroom.

Put succinctly, the micro level transformative reflexive pedagogy provides a self-critical introspection of the teacher's strategic approach which induces new insights for improvement. Thus, transformative reflexivity generates solutions to explicit teaching strategies.

#### ***3.2 Macro level reflexive pedagogy***

At the macro level, the transformative reflexivity pedagogy is centred on a broader institutional-wide scholarship. In this context, the institutional strategy demands that academics are up-to-date on teaching knowledge. It is expected that the institutional wide strategy includes incorporating academic proficiency certifications to support teaching and learning for its academics. Specifically, such initiatives are about improving student learning through communicating and investigating ones teaching through the lens of the students. Further along these lines, constructive alignment must be pronounced to effect the transformative reflexivity of teaching activity. As a guide, this ensures that key questions are posed at critical teaching periods to understand student learning, the ability to work with provided resources and how to know when knowledge has been imparted. It is expected that this will assist the tutor in developing the skills, knowledge and ability that will foster the development of their intellectual capabilities. The crucial nature of institutions implies that policies and procedures for teaching guidance and support are provided. Although this precept may appear self-evident, institutions have the responsibility to bring these initiatives to bear by monitoring and reviewing such procedures. In essence, the outcomes would ensure that teaching and teaching is enhanced, while student engagement will satisfactorily be enriched.

#### 4. Methodology

In addressing the two sub-research questions shaping this study, this article draws on a qualitative study in examining teaching and quality enterprise pedagogy. The empirical component of this study is rooted in the interpretivist perspective (Eisenhardt, 1989; Hammersley, 1992) towards understanding the differences between the respondents as social actors (Saunders et al., 2016; Bryman and Bell, 2015). Owing to the part that interpretivism is centred on the reality of the subjective experience and uniqueness of human inquiry (Schwandt, 1994), the article adopts a case study approach to investigate the contemporary phenomenon which exists between students and teachers within its real life context (Yin, 2014). The comparison of different cases provides for clearer conclusions in explaining issues of trust. The point being that it becomes expedient to uncover how both parties make sense of their relationships from a particular vantage point (King and Horrocks, 2012).

Six cases were selected through a purposive and theoretical sampling in line with the research questions to explore the processes which shape learning and quality enterprise teaching pedagogy (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). The choice of six respondents was aimed at comparing students' and teachers' perceptions especially as it relates to their unique environments. The unit of analysis for this study focused on the dyadic relationship between student and teachers in order to gain an understanding of quality enterprise teaching approach. Data was collected in the summer of 2019 using semi-structured interviews to examine why a set of student perceptions and teaching decisions emerged (Schramm, 1971; Yin, 2014).

The consideration for limiting bias was minimised through bracketing to ensure that the findings reflected the narrative provided by the respondents in their interviews. In addition, patterns were identified, analysed and reported within data using thematic analysis. This becomes important as it aided the description of data in rich detail while interpreting various aspects of the research questions (Boyatzis, 1998). We contend that little attention has been paid to issues of teaching and quality enterprise and pedagogy. The below table highlights the profiles of participants involved in this study.

Table 1 Profile of participants

<i>Case Number</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Educational Level</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Location</i>
Case One	Male	Student/Entrepreneur	30	Graduate	Fashion	United Kingdom
Case Two	Female	Student/Entrepreneur	32	Graduate	Manufacturing	United States of America
Case Three	Female	Lecturer	37	PhD	Academia	United Kingdom
Case Four	Male	Lecturer	40	MBA	Academia	Africa
Case Five	Male	Lecturer	42	PHD	Academia	United Kingdom
Case Six	Female	Student/Entrepreneur	33	Graduate	Services	United Kingdom/Africa

### 5. Data analysis and procedure

In examining student perception and teacher’s experiences about quality enterprise pedagogy, we made effort to adopt the best approaches for data collection. In this vein, we sought to ensure that data collected was reflective and indicative of the true responses of the participants. To a broader extent, this provided an opportunity for rich and valid data to support this study. With this in mind, we adopted the combination of documentary analysis and semi structured interviews as dual sources of empirical evidence. Further along these lines, a thematic analysis was chosen to deliver a unique but structured methodology for the analysis of patterns within the data corpus. This involved the comparison of the responses in order to identify commonalities as well as differences across the findings. Part of this process, involved a within case and cross case synthesis of the evidence, as quotes were used to build evidence for the readership.

*First order concept*

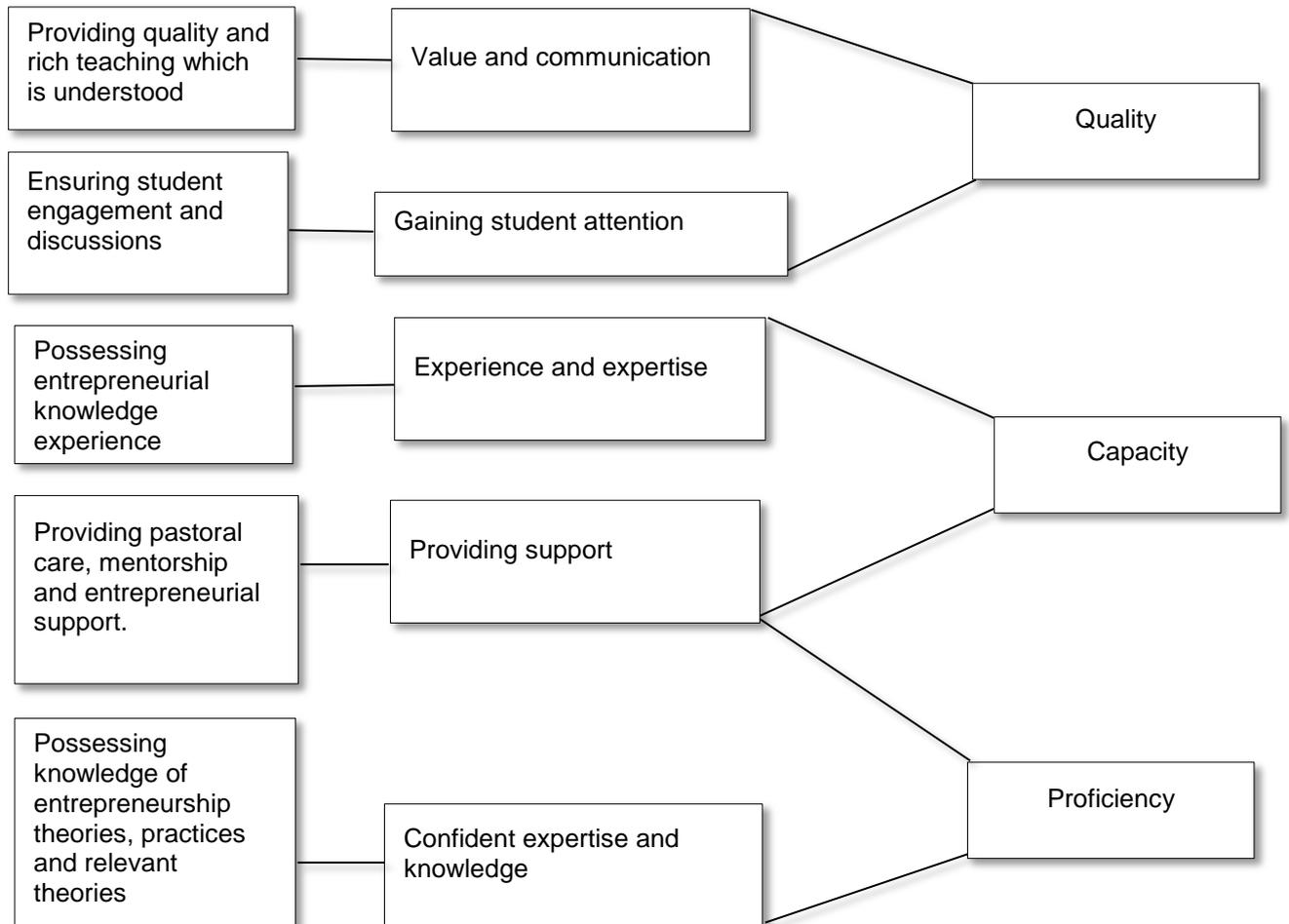


Figure 1 Example data structure

## **6. Findings**

From our empirical findings, there is evidence that quality teaching is enhanced by the process of transformative reflection by which teachers are able to critically analyse their approaches. In this vein, a reflect-evaluate-strategise approach is undertaken to improving teaching and student engagement. This involves changing key aspects of teaching styles in a systematic way of drawing from the evidence available to the teacher. A typical excerpt is provided by one of the respondents:

‘Teaching for me is a passion, however students seem not to enjoy my teaching. I tend to notice this through their levels of engagement and this is not satisfying. I always go back home and try to be better the next day. I try to engage them more and try to seek their attention. It works most times for me but I know I need more application’ (Interview number four).

The above evidence involves a self-induced reflection which enables the teacher to critically review aspects of one’s teaching. This ensures that such action supports the adjustment of teaching approaches through self-monitoring. The respondent refers to a transformative reflective cycle which aims at improving teaching approaches.

Although much can be achieved through reflection, the empirical findings further points to the need for suitable learning activities which will shape the entrepreneurial mind-set of the students. When asked about the suitability of the intended learning outcomes, one of the respondents provided the below excerpt:

‘It is always important to go back to the drawing board. My approach is to ensure that I achieve the learning outcomes through what my teaching approach. This includes providing unique learning activities that will stimulate student development’ (Interview number five)

Interestingly, the transformative reflective process enhances the pedagogical message transmitted to the student. Here the tutor ensures that tasks and activities are designed to support the development of student enterprise. Crucially and within the responses of the students, we found that a major barrier to enterprise teaching was a proficiency in this area. One of the student respondents implied that proficiency was not only related to theory but also with the ability to provide career support to respective students. One of the respondents sums her claims as follows:

‘In all the university entrepreneurship modules, we had good lecturers but some had never run their own business. I feel this was an issue for me as a young business person. It is difficult to just teach when the practical experience is lacking’ (Interview number six).

From the above statement, it becomes evident that teachers may not be able to teach effectively if they are not knowledgeable about the subject area. However the student’s response calls for expertise which transcends the classroom. Thus, the target for transformative reflexive action may like in broader macro institutional-wide initiatives which reinforce the recruitment of academic practitioners.

On the scholarship of teaching and learning, quality entrepreneurial pedagogy was identified as ensuring student engagement, providing mentorship and stimulating the cognitive process of the students. Two of the students interviewed report that approaches of teaching were important but more importantly there was a need for stimulating group tasks and assessments. This should be based on real life projects and evaluated by real entrepreneurs. A typical excerpt indicated the role of group assessments and projects:

‘To bring the best from students with regards to entrepreneurship, demands good assessments and tasks. This should be based on real life projects and must be demanding in capturing key concepts of the business formation. Traditional individual class work and assessments are not enough. They are not stimulating.’ (Interview number two).

Another perspective to quality teaching was provided by one of the teachers who corroborates the above statement. However in addition, his response calls for a quality in teaching and learning climate. This was based on the assumption that teachers must provide a climate for quality teaching. This involves breaking the barriers to approachability, providing a friendly teaching space and mentorship sessions. As such, this climate would provide a positive effect on learning and reciprocal feedback.

The scope and function of quality teaching and learning was emphasised in the feedback and the provision of formative evaluation to lecturers. This approach supports the reflexivity and meta-cognitive strategies by providing clarity to teaching approaches and student learning. However it goes beyond this, as the evaluation includes a 360 degree feedback methodology. Here students are evaluated based on their learning and engagement, while the lecturers are evaluated based on their approach and teaching style. One of the lecturers describes the role of the 360 evaluation as follows:

‘In teaching, almost every approach is effective as long as the right strategy is adopted. I aim to actualise this through student and teaching clarity. In this reciprocal approach, the student provides formative evaluation which provides examples of their learning difficulties and complaints. This always has a positive effect on my

teaching (Interview number three).

Beyond the traditional peer evaluation forms, the above excerpt indicates the need for a reciprocal form which provides support for improvement. Through this reflexive approach, students are tasked with taking ownership and control of their learning. Here, the obstacles faced in the course of learning are confirmed as the teacher is expected to keep track of the teaching shortcomings with strategies for improvement.

Table 2 Typical excerpt from respondents

Respondent	Typical Excerpt on quality
Case One	<i>Quality teaching must include realisable outcomes and clear. This should be simple and properly articulated.</i>
Case Two	<i>I believe quality teaching must be productive. As a student I would have loved to be able to apply what I learnt to my business or be given tasks which would support my business.</i>
Case three	<i>Tutors must possess knowledge of entrepreneurship and relevant theories. In this way, one is able to apply student learning with the outcomes. More importantly quality teaching involves constant self-monitoring and revaluation</i>
Case Four	<i>Quality teaching means applying and adapting ones skills to the teaching needs. Here a good teacher should be able to reflect in a continuous loop to bring out the best from one's students.</i>
Case Five	<i>The best teaching approaches require good evaluations which are detailed. This should be reciprocal as the teachers become privy to his teaching shortcomings and the needs of the student. This would allow for thought provoking revaluation of strategies.</i>
Case Six	<i>Universities must recruit experts to teaching entrepreneurship. This gives us the confidence in the expertise and proficiency of the lectures.</i>

## **7. Discussion and conclusion**

With teaching and quality at the heart of the issue, this study has examined the perception and experiences of participants as it relates to enterprise pedagogy. In particular, issues impart quality across student entrepreneurship is explored. In the context of this study, the concept of transformative reflexive pedagogy stands out as it provides a unique introspection of teaching method and approaches. In examining the cases, the findings reflected more commonalities than differences across the respondents. The expertise of the teachers was revealed to be a hindrance to quality teaching. As the students would have preferred academics with proven entrepreneurial success in venture formation. The commonality in the findings revealed that a broader institutional reflective initiative that would deliver transformative results.

In addressing the weakness of teaching approaches, the teachers provided excerpts that supported a critical reflection of teaching approaches. This involves a reflect-evaluate-strategise approach towards improving teaching and student engagement. The teachers were found to systematically change key aspects of their teaching styles by drawing from evaluation evidence available. Specifically, the empirical findings found the need for suitable learning activities which will shape the entrepreneurial mind-set of the students.

Evidence across the participant responses revealed the need for pastoral support and mentorship. Not surprisingly, this finding was not only related to theory but also with the ability to provide career support to respective students. Accordingly, the evidence points to the essence of mentorship as a unique aspect for entrepreneurial development. Further along these lines, the findings revealed that assessments and group tasks were important for stimulating student intellect. While we acknowledge this approach, we believe that this may include providing external mentors who would provide career development support for students.

The findings also emphasised that the scope and function of quality teaching and learning and the provision of formative evaluation to lecturers. However it goes beyond this as the evaluation includes a 360 degree evaluation. Here students are evaluated based on their learning and engagement, while the lecturers are evaluated based on their approach and teaching style. This notion indicates the need for a reciprocal form which provides support for improvement. Through this reflexive approach, students are tasked with taking ownership and control of their learning. Here, the obstacles faced on the course of learning are confirmed as the teacher is expected to keep track of the teaching shortcomings with strategies for improvement.

With regards to the method adopted for this study, we acknowledge that a quantitative approach would have not provided a rich understanding of this study phenomenon. This is because quantitative studies seek to provide casual explanations and numerical measurements. Thus a qualitative study is unique to this study as it provides a richer understanding of quality in teaching and learning through the lens of the local respondents. Nonetheless, one of key limitation of this study may have to do with the sample size. We recommend that future research may build on the foundation of this study to examine a more robust sample size. This may include a richer comparison of perspectives drawn to include university senior leadership.

On the basis of this expectation, our contribution provides insights into approaches for enhancing quality teaching and learning. We contend that the problems of teaching and quality in enterprise pedagogy demands creating a unique climate which encompasses holistic student interactions. In this vein, we believe that this has a strong impact on student learning. While some may see limitations to entrepreneurial learning from a student perspective, we argue that success expectation lies at the door step of the program design and approach. This presupposes an application of principles which tutors and program must adhere to.

With regards to policy and practical approach, it is expected that the reflexive pedagogical approach first focuses on the tutor who explores the need to reflect on their key strengths, the willingness to collect student feedback and a continuous reflection of improved teaching. On the other hand, universities should address the associated interventions to create and entrepreneurial culture. As such, the appeal of the transformative reflexive pedagogy lies in the opportunity to probe the inner texture of adopted teaching practices. Our article points that transformative reflexive pedagogy induces introspection for the teachers by allowing a scrutiny of teaching approaches.

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