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ISBE Abstract

Objectives

Over the past twenty years, Design Thinking (DT) has emerged in a variety of educational contexts of entrepreneurship and there is an existing debate on the value of integrating Design Thinking into Entrepreneurship Education (Daniel et al., 2016; Huq & Gilbert, 2017; Linton & Klinton, 2019; Sarooghi et al., 2019; Val et al., 2019). In 2020 the new EntreComp Playbook by the European Union was published, describing Design Thinking as one of the three most important entrepreneurial methods (Baciagalupo et al, 2020). However, although design thinking has gained wide popularity and application in EE practice (Neck & Green, 2011, Nielsen & Stovang, 2015; Sarooghi et al., 2019; McLuskie et al., 2019; Linton & Klinton, 2019), there have been scarce insights into how Entrepreneurship Educators actually apply Design Thinking into their classroom practice. Therefore, this study answers questions about what Entrepreneurship Educators actually “do” in their educational practice when integrating Design Thinking.

Approach

This study follows an interpretive and qualitative approach, drawing upon semi-structured interviews from 29 entrepreneurship educators from Higher Education in the UK and Northern Europe. Thus, this study puts focus on the quality of the Design Thinking integration in Entrepreneurship Education - from an educator’s perspective – and demonstrates that entrepreneurship educators integrate Design Thinking in many ways into their educational practice.

Results

As a result, this work defines a framework for the four forms (selective, idea-centric, procedural, holistic) of Design Thinking integration in the context of Entrepreneurship Education.

Implications

If entrepreneurship educators hope to deliver Design Thinking-based educational experiences for their students (Sarooghi et al., 2019), it is yet to be defined how entrepreneurship educators should be trained in Design Thinking. In particular, this study has identified a need for appropriate training of the educators to extend their awareness of the principles of Design Thinking.

Value/Originality

This research has identified four novel and distinct ways in which Design Thinking can be integrated with(in) Entrepreneurship Education. The value of this new understanding is that it allows educators to be more reflexive about why and how they utilise the potentially power full tool of design thinking – addressing an apparent lack of this understanding in contemporary practice.

Key Words: entrepreneurship, educator, design-thinking, perspective, qualitative interview-study, educator-centred perspective