



Introduction

Entrepreneurship in education has garnered significant attention in recent years, emerging as a crucial element in equipping young individuals to navigate the complexities of the modern world. Its recognition has increased significantly in the USA, Asian and European countries during the last decades in the field of education¹

Entrepreneurship education revolves around learners acquiring more than just technical skills, but critical skills such as leadership, creative thinking, and problem-solving, which are key competencies for all young people, needed to thrive in the economy. Beyond developing core entrepreneurial skills needed in the business world, these taught skills generally support personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employability²

Drawing inspiration from indigenous systems, such as the Igbo apprenticeship system in Nigeria, it offers valuable insights into fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and skills among youth. This model emphasizes mentorship, experiential learning, and the transfer of tacit knowledge from experienced entrepreneurs to the younger ones looking to follow the same path.

Valuable Lessons from the Entrepreneurship System:

There are valuable lessons that can be learnt from entrepreneurship systems and incorporated into the traditional classroom model;

Empowering the Next Generation: Entrepreneurship in Education

By Evi Michael



1. **Experiential Learning:** This model emphasizes hands-on experience and practical skill development, which may be more effective and enriching than the regular traditional instruction learning ⁴. It highlights learning by doing things by oneself instead of just reading about them and gaining only theoretical knowledge. By adopting this approach in the school curricula, young people are better prepared when faced with challenges in the real world because they already have some experience dealing with similar situations.
2. **Mentorship:** Facilitating mentorship opportunities can give students valuable guidance, support, and exposure to diverse real-world contexts. It provides an immersive learning experience where one can learn directly from experienced professionals in the field.
3. **Collaboration:** The collaborative nature seen in the entrepreneurial model serves as a solid foundation that fosters a supportive ecosystem. It is centered on building relationships, sharing resources, and creating a network of support that can help one navigate the challenges and also provide access to opportunities. By encouraging and reinforcing collaboration as well as networking within the school system, a more inclusive and vibrant community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed will be created.

Implications for Education Policy and Practice

To integrate entrepreneurship into education effectively, policymakers and educators must recognize the value and great benefits of systems like the Igbo apprenticeship system. By incorporating elements such as experiential learning, creative thinking, mentorship, leadership, problem solving and collaboration etc into curricula and pedagogical approaches, schools can nurture these mindsets and skills essential for success in the 21st-century economy. More so, an additional benefit of doing so is it may help to curb unemployment for the youth as well as to strategically position the economy for sustainable development ³

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship in education plays a crucial role in equipping students with the mindset, skills, and competencies needed to navigate an increasingly complex and dynamic world. In a study that evaluated the impact of an entrepreneurship education program, 1036 students were tested, distinguishing between control and experimental groups. By integrating entrepreneurship content and a specialized program targeting creativity, leadership, and problem-solving, the results showed that students with a favorable attitude, particularly those who were actively engaged in the program. ⁵

By drawing insights from this model, educators can design more effective and culturally relevant approaches, empowering learners to become innovative, resilient, and socially responsible.