
Case Study 2: From Challenge to Specialized Platform

Knowledge Entrepreneurship in online language teaching

The core of Knowledge Entrepreneurship lies in the creation of applications and commercialization of innovative ideas, technologies and solutions. Knowledge and skills are used to create economic value at the same time make a contribution to society. There are clear limitations in the area of online language teaching. Although current tools can be used universally, they do not meet the specific requirements of language teachers. This case study illustrates how a specialized platform was developed through the use of effectuation, KSAOs, networking and design thinking.

Challenge: commercial inefficiencies and online language teaching

- The What-How-Why method of Design Thinking is used to specify the core problems:
- What (The Challenge): Using general tools such as Google Docs to create language lessons is inefficient. Specialized features are lacking, making the design of engaging and effective lessons tedious and time-consuming. This often results in the actual amount of work not being adequately compensated.
- How (The Persistence): The problem persists because existing solutions are based on a “one-size-fits-all” approach and neglect the specific requirements of language teaching. Teachers have to improvise, combine different tools, and invest additional time. This reinforces the feeling of inefficiency.
- Why (The Emotional Drivers): Teachers want to offer high-quality instruction, but experience frustration due to the contradiction between their requirements and the inadequate tools available.

Implementation: Applied methods and principles

The implementation was based on key concepts of Knowledge Entrepreneurship:

Effectuation as a mindset

Development is based on existing resources (KSAOs and network). Instead of setting a fixed goal, various possible developments are tested and adapted.

KSAOs as a basis

Personal resources are systematically analyzed:

- **Knowledge:** didactic and linguistic knowledge, practical experience in online teaching, management and organizational experience, knowledge of dealing with learning difficulties, informal learning through further training.
- **Skills:** communication, leadership, organization of learning processes.
- **Abilities:** determination, open-mindedness.
- **Other characteristics:** values such as honesty and open-mindedness, high intrinsic motivation.

Strategic networking

- Existing contacts: Experts from the fields of education, media, entrepreneurship, design, and technology.
- New contacts: Targeted search for partners in marketing and communication.
- Experiences: Interviews and workshops with experts provided valuable insights; chance encounters led to further key contacts being made.

Systematic design thinking

The iterative process of understanding – creating – delivering is applied:

- Understanding: Analyzing the needs of online language teachers and precisely defining the problem using the What-How-Why method.
- Create: Develop a platform idea, create wireframes and prototypes, conduct user tests.
- Deliver: Presentation, feedback loops, adjustments, preparation for market launch.

Results/findings: Progress and next steps

- **Prototype realized:** An initial functional version of the platform has already been created and made publicly available. This demonstrates the concrete implementation of the idea and the successful collaboration with technical partners.
- **Ongoing developments:** The visual design and the integration of special exercise models are currently in progress. The development process is iterative and involves ongoing adjustments.
- **Detailed roadmap:** A 15-step development plan serves as a structured guide from conceptualization to market launch and continuous improvement.

Successes so far:

- Precise problem definition using the What-How-Why method.
- Systematic analysis of our own KSAOs as a starting point.
- Structured prototyping process based on design thinking principles.
- Initial successes in networking, including the acquisition of relevant partners.

Still challenging:

- Finalization of the design and exercise models.
- Acquisition of additional contacts, especially in marketing.
- Transition from prototype to fully functional platform and its market launch.

Learnings/implications: Best practices for knowledge entrepreneurs

- **Use your own experiences as a starting point:** Problems you have personally experienced provide the starting point for relevant innovations.
- **Structured problem analysis:** Methods such as What-How-Why analysis enable a deep understanding of the needs and emotional drivers of the target group.
- **Use your own resources (KSAOs):** A systematic inventory of existing resources is crucial for developing effective strategies.
- **Proactive and diverse networking:** A diverse network provides access to knowledge, support, and potential partners. Missing contacts must be specifically identified and acquired.
- **Apply design thinking iteratively:** The steps of understanding, creating, and delivering form a clear framework for developing innovative solutions. Prototyping enables early testing and feedback.
- **Feedback and iteration:** Continuously adapting prototypes based on user and expert feedback increases effectiveness and user-friendliness.
- **Specialization creates added value:** Tailor-made solutions for specific target groups eliminate inefficiencies more effectively than general standard tools.