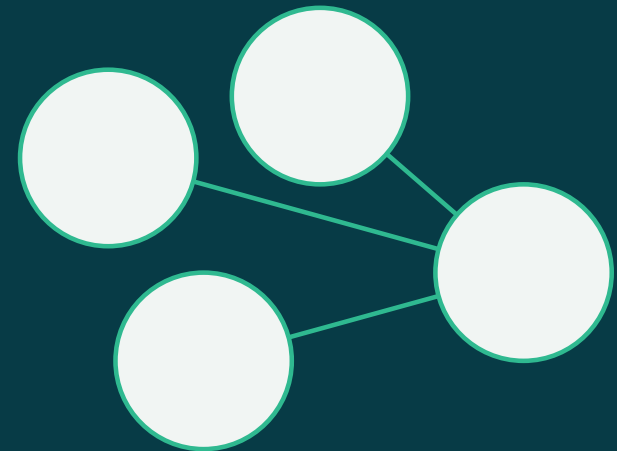


The Workbook

Frank Mintjes

How to design learning tools that entrepreneurs actually use?

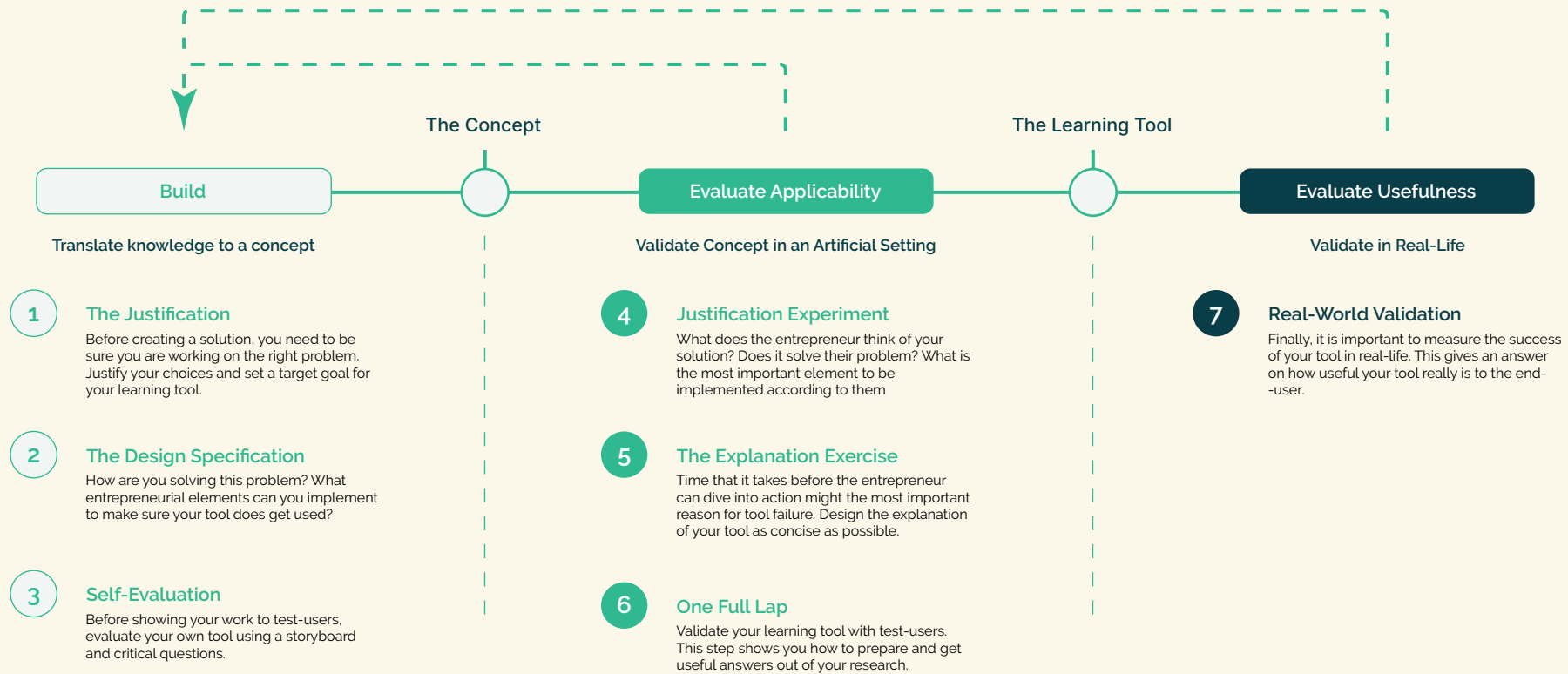
7 Steps to build and validate your entrepreneurial learning tool



Introduction

This workbook provides 7 steps to build and evaluate your learning tool for entrepreneurs. It uses design science principles, combined with specific elements for entrepreneurship research. By using these 7 steps, you will get a better understanding of how your tool will perform among entrepreneurs and it will give guidance in how to validate your tool with end-users. Step 1-3 dive into the reason why your tool exists and how to implement several elements that are important when creating a tool for entrepreneurs. Step 4-6 will show you

how to evaluate your concept tool in an artificial setting. This way you can gather feedback and iterate fast with honest feedback of entrepreneurs. As a result, you will get feedback on how your tool performs relating to your original design goal. In step 7, guidance is provided how to evaluate your tool in real-life. It provides support in setting up a real-world experiment.



1

The Justification

- Understand the problem being solved and justify the need of your learning tool.
- First, identify the target audience and their level of entrepreneurial experience. Consider the desire of the entrepreneur to be guided step-by-step.
- Define the specific problem the entrepreneur is facing and validate its significance. Be as specific as possible.
- Determine how the tool will address and solve the entrepreneur's problem.
- Define essential elements and research conclusions for tool implementation. Keep it limited to the most important conclusions or elements.

Goal: This step creates the basis for your learning and sets the design objective to proceed with.

Who is your audience?

Describe the entrepreneur:

Level of entrepreneurship experience:



Need for step-by-step guidance:



What is the problem of this entrepreneur?

Describe the problem:

Side effects that need to be avoided:

What is the goal of this learning tool?

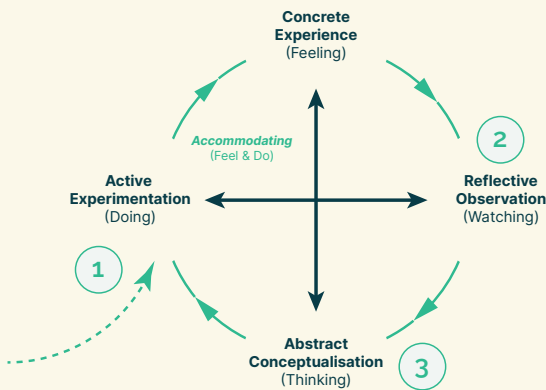
How does your research solve this problem:

Essential elements/frameworks to use:

2

The Design Specification

- o Entrepreneurs learn by experience. This can be visualized into the 4 stages shown below. Your tool must address all of these 4 stages to optimize the learning process.
- o The preferable spot of entrepreneurs is in the top-left corner. The feel & do or accommodating spot.
- o For the optimal learning experience while using your tool: enable immediate action for entrepreneurs (1), guide the entrepreneurs in reflection (2) and provide real-world examples to enhance understanding (3).



Build

Goal: Specify your learning tool to match the preferences of entrepreneurs and optimize learning.

1 Design Action-Oriented

Describe the exercises/activities/objectives the entrepreneur can use directly:

2 Design Reflection

Over what timespan is the tool used:
(Days/Weeks/Months/Years)

How often does the entrepreneur reflect on the tool:

Describe how the entrepreneur reflects on the tool:

3 Use Examples

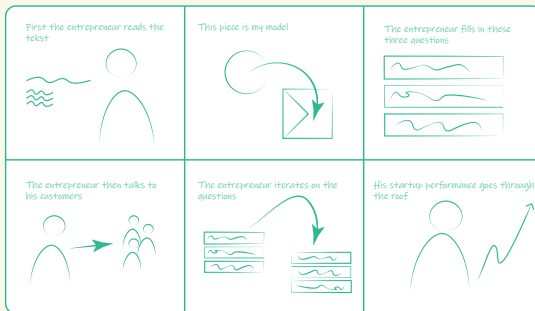
Use an example to display how your learning tool would work in context. It helps to choose an example which already has shown to be successful in an entrepreneurial setting. This makes the tool more trustworthy.

Example used to explain context:

3

Self-Evaluation

- Before testing the tool with entrepreneurs, it is important to check if the tool is ready to be used. With this step, you will dive deeper into your learning tool and get new perspectives in how your tool would perform in context.



Goal: Check if you have thought through all of the aspects regarding your learning tool.

1 Create a Storyboard

To check how the tool performs, it is important to create a storyboard of the intended use of the tool. Begin by giving every step a title and carefully thinking about every detail the entrepreneur must perform within the tool. Also think about the time that an entrepreneur needs to spend on each step.

2 Define Points of Information i

Afterwards, it is important to define the points of information within the storyboard. These are points where a piece of information is provided to the entrepreneur to explain the tool. Think about every time you provide the entrepreneur with context on how to use your tool.

3 Define Points of Reflection R

Finally, it is important to note the points of reflection of your tool. These are points where the entrepreneur reflects on its previous work. If there is no point of reflection, note the steps where a point of reflection is possible. By using reflection in your tool, you will optimize the learning process of the entrepreneur and therefore make your tool more successful.

Title: _____

(i) (R)

Title: _____

(i) (R)

Title: _____

(i) (R)

Title: _____

(i) (R)

Title: _____

(i) (R)

Title: _____

(i) (R)

Build

4

Justification Experiment

- o This first experiment is crucial for the success of the tool, as it must have a clear purpose.
- o Seek the opinion of the entrepreneur to ensure clarity on the problem being solved and how the tool addresses it.
- o Validate if the problem is significant enough to warrant solving, considering the option of narrowing the tool's scope if necessary.
- o Prioritize solving one problem effectively rather than attempting to address multiple problems with mediocre results.
- o Encourage honest feedback from entrepreneurs during tool usage to uncover any shortcomings or areas for improvement.

Goal: Validate the clarity of your tool together with the need to solve this problem.

1 Ask the entrepreneur what problem this could solve

Give the entrepreneur 5 minutes to look at your tool and read the information provided. Afterwards, ask the entrepreneur what the purpose of this tool is and what problem it could solve. Write it down and reflect on your previous stated answer in the 'justification card'.

Answer of the entrepreneur:

2 What is the entrepreneurs current situation?

Now check the current situation of the entrepreneur. Does the entrepreneur really have this problem and are there already fitting solutions out there. Also ask what the entrepreneur really needs to solve its problem. Reflect back on your answers in the 'justification card' and iterate if necessary.

What are alternative solutions?

What does the entrepreneur do now?

What is absolutely necessary to solve this problem?

Evaluate Applicability

5

Explanation Exercise

- Lengthy and complex information can hinder the effectiveness of entrepreneurial tools by delaying action.
- Entrepreneurs prefer tools that are self-explanatory and minimize the need for extensive reading.
- Limit the amount of text in the tool to allow for a smooth user experience.
- Conduct exercises to test the necessary amount of information required to guide the entrepreneur in using the tool.
- Additional supplementary information can be provided on separate pages, but it should not be mandatory to read.

Use the language of your target audience:

- It is important that your audience understands the language of your tool. An addition to this exercise is to think of different words to explain your tool to your audience. Afterwards you can check which words worked best to convey the message.

Goal: Optimize the explanation of your tool to match the action-oriented view of entrepreneurs.

1 Create 3 explanations for every step (use more words every time)

Goals and Objectives

Fill in the goals and objectives of your startup. Make sure to keep it concise and focussed.

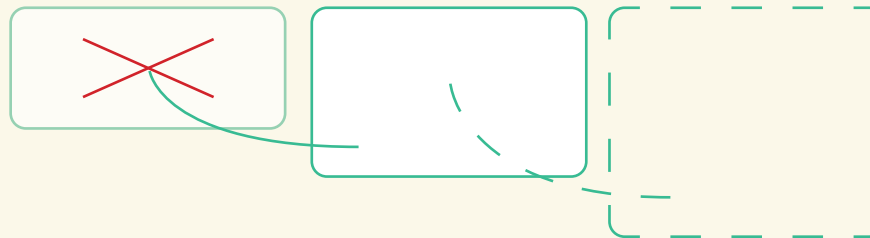
Goals and Objectives

Fill in the goals and objectives of your startup. Remember to maintain conciseness and focus throughout your response. Your goals and objectives should be realistic and attainable, considering the available resources

Goals and Objectives

Fill in the goals and objectives of your startup by outlining the specific areas or industries you plan to target. Consider factors such as market demand, competition, and your unique value proposition. Describe your intended impact, whether it's solving a particular problem, fulfilling a need, or disrupting an existing market.

2 First give the entrepreneur the least amount of words. If the entrepreneur cannot proceed, provide the second card.



6

One Full Lap

- Prepare the tool and select a focus group for effective testing with the entrepreneur. Consider the specific details you want to evaluate during the test.
- Seek honest opinions from the entrepreneur rather than seeking feedback that aligns with your preferences. Use this feedback to improve the tool and increase its likelihood of future usage.
- Ask yourself the following questions to prepare:
 - How and where do you want to test your model?
 - Do you want to be present?
 - Do you want the entrepreneur to speak aloud?

5 Questions to ask the Entrepreneur:

- Where in your process would you use this tool?
- Which steps seem irrelevant in this tool?
- Which step was difficult to proceed with?
- Which step added a lot of value in your process?
- Which step was unclear?

Goal: Gather feedback on your learning tool by testing with entrepreneurs.

1 Choose your Focus Group

Choose the entrepreneurs you want to test with. Try to find a close resemblance to the user who will use your tool in practice. Use the storyboard tool in step 3 to map out specific tasks or steps that you want to test.

2 Let the Entrepreneur use your Tool

Work together with the user, but try not to guide them too much through the process. By using open-ended tasks, you will lead your user to show genuine reactions.

3 Observe and make Notes

Observe while your test-user is using your tool. Use the storyboard on the back to define the steps that the entrepreneur takes while using your tool. Also rate the steps on their difficulty to use, the time that it takes before the user starts to take action and give the step an overall grade. This way you remember where to improve your tool.

<hr/> <p>Difficulty of use: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Grade:</p> <p>Time before use: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>	<hr/> <p>Difficulty of use: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Grade:</p> <p>Time before use: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>	<hr/> <p>Difficulty of use: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Grade:</p> <p>Time before use: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
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Evaluate Applicability

7

The Justification

Goal: This step validates the usefulness of your tool without you interfering in the process.

- Conduct a long-term study to validate the actual usefulness of the tool.
- Provide the learning tool to a group of entrepreneurs without interference in the process.
- Establish and track key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the tool's effectiveness.
- Formulate specific questions to assess the impact and value of the tool.
- Evaluate the results of the study to gather insights and make any necessary improvements to the tool.

1 Choose your Focus Group

Choose the entrepreneurs you want to test with. Try to find at least three entrepreneurs with different backgrounds, within the boundary limit of your target audience.

2 Set KPIs and a Timeframe

Determine the measures how you want to test your tool. This could also be a survey containing questions that an entrepreneur needs to fill in. Also determine the timeframes in which you want to test these KPIs over time.

3 Test the KPIs and Evaluate

Measure your KPIs over time and evaluate your learning tool. These KPIs should give an indication of the actual usefulness of the tool. A qualitative study could provide deeper information on the results of the KPIs. Use these results to iterate on the learning tool if necessary.

