Making First Moments: Classroom Storytelling Measures Vulnerability for Start-up Project Success
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Abstract
Our minds are built to remember stories. What engages the audience to respond to the first moments of a story? In this work, the engaging characteristics of the first moments in successful entrepreneurial storytelling are conceptualized and the findings are utilized to teach engineers, designers, and stakeholders how to yield actionable results.

We ask:
1. How can the predictive engagement aspect of the first moments be introduced and measured?
2. How do we develop a procedure to apply the results for effective storytelling to the start-up phases of a project?

Validated by previous work, four concepts explore moments: self-motivated, ambiguity readiness level, passionate social connection, and empathy. A series of planned prompts show how active work in classroom dynamics is applied for examination and prototyping of diverse students’ research or start-up stories. A theoretical blend of applied psychology, entrepreneurial leadership, art, and design thinking provides a qualitative focus for student storytelling. Results reveal how vulnerability amplifies engagement.

Key words: Storytelling, Entrepreneuring, Vulnerability, Empathy, Innovation, Engineering Education, Design Thinking