Turning a dream into a reality — youth practice entrepreneurship

**AT A GLANCE**
Students learn basic concepts of starting a business, as well as the skills to confidently become an entrepreneur themselves someday.

**The Situation**
Many people strive to start their own business. Their motivation stems from wanting to be their own boss, aiming to address a need within their community, hoping to share their ideas with others, or creating a better life for themselves and their families. However, most are not aware of all the necessary requirements and tasks related to actually achieving these goals. When asked what they want to be when they grow up, the majority of students do not name entrepreneur. Generally, K-12 students do not learn specifically about entrepreneurship and are not given the option to take business classes until college. Additionally, students are not as encouraged to start their own businesses as they are to join a company or work for an organization. Most young adults do not consider becoming an entrepreneur due to the limited amount of information they received throughout their education.

**Our Response**
In the spring of 2018, University of Idaho faculty and interns led a six-hour program adapted from University of Nebraska Extension’s *EntrepreneurSHIP Investigation: Discover the E-Scene* curriculum. The program was delivered to five different sites reaching 97 youth with varying age groups. Students were split into groups and given time during each workshop to create and design a business together. Members of the community judged presentations during the final workshop based on quality, thoughtfulness of ideas and incorporation of program concepts. 97 students, aged five to 18, participated in these five programs. Each program series was adapted to fit appropriate ages. The majority of students, 78.26 percent, self-identified as Hispanic.

**Program Outcomes**
96 percent of participants reported they enjoyed learning about entrepreneurship. Participants learned how to define the term “entrepreneur” and gained a better understanding of business concepts and processes.
Approximately 94 percent reported that they learned new information about the skills necessary to be an entrepreneur. Students also learned about the risks and barriers involved with starting a business and how to overcome those obstacles. Roughly 95 percent of students reported they learned new ideas regarding business challenges.

90 percent learned new information about how to set a goal. This reflected an important teaching concept known as SMART goals: the students practiced making goals that were specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. They also learned the difference between short- and long-term goal setting.

When asked if they could become an entrepreneur someday, 93 percent felt confident they could.

Students listed the following responses when asked what they liked most about the program:

- The thought of being an entrepreneur and what it would feel like.
- The opportunity to create our own business.
- How the workshops were so hands on.
- Working with new people and the teamwork involved in being arranged into groups.
- You can now be inspired to do it in the future.
- It was fun and creative.

This program allowed youth to take business concepts and apply them to a real-world model. Participants established and improved communication skills by working individually and in a group setting which offered a unique experience to develop and practice important skills. They will use these skills throughout their lifetime and will be invaluable as they progress and continue their education.

**The Future**

Future workshops will provide more Idaho students with the opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship. The program’s continuation will provoke thoughtful, detailed and creative problem solving. These workshops will continue to provide students with a solid foundation about business that gives basic skills to confidently pursue entrepreneurship in the future.

Program expansion efforts are currently being investigated between Extension and on-campus faculty. This collaboration will encourage participants to pursue collegiate-level and real-world entrepreneurship opportunities where their skills and knowledge can be applied.

Students work together to determine their business’s marketing strategies.

**Cooperators and Co-Sponsors**

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