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BEITI Project: The Teaching of Entrepreneurship at Grade Schools

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Abstract
This paper proposes the teaching of entrepreneurship at grade schools for improvement in the economy of countries, strong empowerment of the critical age group youth and young adults for competitiveness in all aspects of creative pursuits for several years to come. The outlined program is entitled Business, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Teaching Interface (BEITI), and it aims to teach the basic didactics in entrepreneurship and build on it the possible business and economic implications of the didactics; in addition teach it early as well as deliver the concepts using fun and creative technology applications most individuals are already comfortable with. The Proposal framework is built on Schumpeter's 1934 advocate that entrepreneurship plays a great role in economic development. This is because entrepreneurs are able to innovate in order to transform commercial products through processes that add economic value. According to Acs et al (2004), that transformation is only made possible when entrepreneurship plays the role of "knowledge filter". Particularly where it is made an integral component of the curricula in schools, it tends to produce leaders in societies that have business knowledge (Nelson & Johnson, 1997).
Keywords: Entrepreneurship Teaching, Creativity, Innovation, BEITI Project, Economic Growth.

1. Introduction

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, collaboration between academia, government and industry reached a consensus that the global economic recovery relies on K-12 Schools embedding entrepreneurship in their curriculum. The discussion at the forum primarily viewed youth entrepreneurship as not being so different from adult entrepreneurship. The only difference being "how entrepreneurship is taught and learned (World Economic Forum, 2009)."

The forum indicated that in the United States and Europe, recent studies had shown high rates of school drop-out with consequential social and economic problems (World Economic Forum, 2009). It was envisaged that entrepreneurship education may be a factor to keep the students in school, due to the interactive and experiential connection between the classroom and the workplace. The forum also identified the global increase in the number of young people, making reference to the Millennial Cohort in the United States (those born within 1980-1990) as being the largest generation in the history of the United States. In China, India, Latin America and the Arab World, similar trends were also observed (World Economic Forum, 2009).

Stephanie Bell-Rose, President, Goldman Sachs Foundation and Thomas W. Payzant, Harvard Graduate School of Education were quoted at the forum to have said, "preparing today's students for success and eventual leadership in the new global marketplace is the most important responsibility in education today… Entrepreneurship education is an important tool to achieving these objectives [and]… should be universally available to provide all students with opportunities to explore and fulfill their potential." (Kelley et al., 2012). Despite these foregoing suggestions and comments in several business meetings and fora, it remains apparent that business and entrepreneurship skills remain scarce, and unlearned in the European and American societies.

1.1 Objective

The objective of this proposal for entrepreneurship teaching at grade schools is to spark economic growth by engaging in early entrepreneurship education and exposure. In most instances, entrepreneurship and business concepts are never taught at all. The proposal also aims at engaging industries and enterprises to pursue innovative approaches (ideas) from the youth. Finally, entrepreneurship teaching at all levels – Elementary, Middle, High, and Technical schools is meant to ensure a re-packaged and upgraded curriculum that allows delivery of basic didactics of science and other subjects in a format that is designed to include intense emphasizing of business and entrepreneurship implication for every concept learned.

2. Literature Review

According to the European Commission, "entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and taking calculated risk, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day-to-day life at home and in society; makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs establishing a social or commercial activity" (European Commission, 2012).

Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004) defined entrepreneurship as follows: "a dynamic process of vision, change, and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Essential ingredients include the willingness to take calculated risks in terms of time, equity, or career; the ability to formulate an effective venture team; the creative skill to marshal needed resources; and fundamental skill of building a strong business plan; and finally, the vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion" (p. 30). The bottom-line of entrepreneurship is the ability to recognize an opportunity based on prior exposure, networking, or experience. Trilling & Fadel (2009) indicated that digital literacy, effective communication, inventive thinking and the sense of high productivity are skills that are necessary for the training of the youth of 21st Century for the achievement of economic growth. These skills are all embedded in entrepreneurship, and are made manifest in what is called entrepreneurship traits.

Entrepreneurship education initiates persistence and networking, and plays the role of psychological orientation that instills the power of creativity. The associated traits include "autonomy, innovativeness, risk-taking, pro-activeness and competitive aggressiveness" (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Other scholars have mentioned psychological components that include the need for achievement, internal locus of control, and tolerance for ambiguity that have been shown to be associated with level of education. According to Warren (2011), a positive relationship exists between gross domestic product and entrepreneurship. Warren therefore recommended the teaching of entrepreneurship in Kenya's module at both grade schools and universities.

Entrepreneurship Education began in the United States in 1947, when the Harvard Business School offered the first entrepreneurship course titled Management of New Enterprise (Katz, 2003). The Bayh Dole Act of 1980 sought to reactivate entrepreneurial activities in American Universities by promoting greater collaboration between universities and industries (Etzkowitz, 1998). Entrepreneurship education exists in the European countries. However, it is mostly taught as elective course (Wilson, 2004). Chinese universities have entrepreneurship modules (Hongbin et al, 2008). Brazil emphasizes entrepreneurship the most among the Latin American countries. Almeida (2008) indicated that 82% of the universities in Brazil introduced the teaching of entrepreneurship in their curriculum after a national law of technological innovation was passed in 2004. In Africa, the United Nations implemented a sustainable entrepreneurship education in the 1990's in countries such as Kenya, Botswana, and Uganda (Nelson & Johnson, 1997). Ghana also has entrepreneurship teaching in all polytechnics and some universities (Asamoah, 2014).

According to Minniti (2008), the success of entrepreneurship depends on institutional environments, mostly government policy. It is governments that regulate factors such as labor cost, commercialization of invention, protection of commercial freedom, property rights, enforceable contracts, and exchange.

3. Conceptual Framework

In order to make the next generation creative in the Business and Entrepreneurship World, the impact needs to start early. Early introduction of Business concepts through innovative learning apps, learning didactics of science and related courses alongside its possible business applications, and favorable participation of companies and governmental agencies in stimulating environments will achieve creativity.

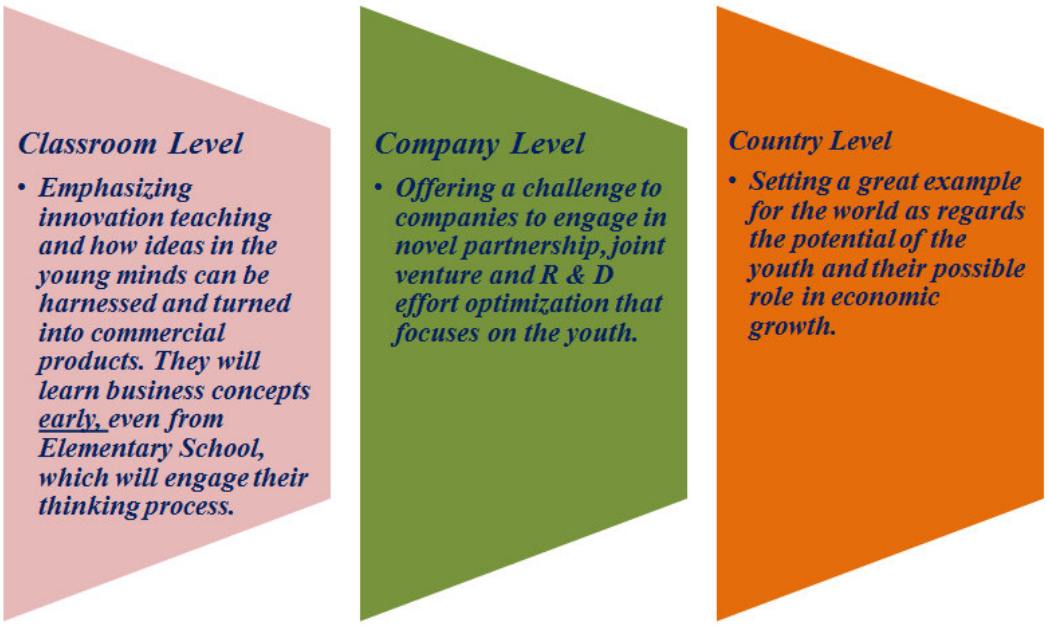

Figure 1: BEITI Project framework.

3.1 Implementation

The proposed approach and methods for implementation of the BEITI Project are structured to the appropriate school or age group. Though approaches may overlap amongst school groups, targeted implementation strategies are critical. The BEITI Project method is patterned into four: Elementary, Middle, High, and Technical Schools.

3.1.1 The BEITI Project approaches for the Elementary Schools, graphically shown in figure 2:

a. Designed Curriculum.
b. Business Story Telling: Using cartoon construct and short films to achieve it.
c. Task Assignment/Role playing: Using composite of team stage drama that can be evaluated and rewarded.
d. Creating learning apps that teach didactics of basic knowledge and leads to suggestion of its business and entrepreneurship implications. Make the kids understand the concept and almost immediately start applying it to rewarding creativity. Such creativity could be set up stepwise to benefit the child's maximum participation and attention.

3.1.2 The BEITI Project approaches for the Middle School, graphically shown in figure 3:

a. Designed Curriculum.
b. Business Story Telling: Using cartoon construct and short films to achieve it.
c. Task Assignment/Role playing: Using composite of team stage drama that can be evaluated and rewarded.
d. Creating learning apps that teach didactics of basic knowledge and leads to suggestion of its business and entrepreneurship implications. Make the kids understand the concept and almost immediately start applying it to rewarding creativity. Such creativity could be set up stepwise to benefit the child's maximum participation and attention.
e. Experiential Learning: Using arranged programs that make room for company tours and meeting with business owners to share in their experiences.
f. Inventive Problem Solving/Creativity: Illustrating with short business case studies that leave room for business and strategic planning, financial statements assessment, and basic tax and valuation procedures.

3.1.3 High School: The BEITI Project approaches for the High School, as shown graphically in figure 4:

a. Designed Curriculum: Elective information technology driven; interactive based course of study (classroom and online) that teaches
   -Basic principles and didactics of business and entrepreneurship
   -Basic principles of earnings, savings and money management
   -Basic principles of credit, banking, loans, and cash flow
   This curriculum will qualify students to take a standardized examination in business creativity, entrepreneurship and information technology and obtain a certificate.
b. Business Story Telling: Using cartoon construct and short films to achieve it.
c. Task Assignment/Role playing: Using composite of team stage drama that can be evaluated and rewarded.
d. Creating learning apps that teach didactics of basic knowledge and leads to suggestion of its business and entrepreneurship implications. Make the kids understand the concept and almost immediately start applying it to rewarding creativity. Such creativity could be set up stepwise to benefit the child's maximum participation and attention.
e. Experiential Learning: Using arranged programs that make room for company tours and meeting with business owners to share in their experiences.
f. Inventive Problem Solving/Creativity: Illustrating with short business case studies that leave room for business and strategic planning, financial statements assessment, and basic tax and valuation procedures.
g. Practical Ventures of Profitability: Operation of vendor machine services and cafeteria ventures on school campuses by Junior Achievement Companies.
h. Mentoring: Teachers and stakeholders serving on the student-company boards as well as helping audit and monitor progress.

3.1.4 Technical School: The BEITI Project approaches for the Technical School, as shown graphically in figure 5:

a. Designed Curriculum: Elective information technology driven; interactive based course of study (classroom and online) that teaches
   -Basic principles and didactics of business and entrepreneurship
   -Basic principles of earnings, savings and money management
   -Basic principles of credit, banking, loans, and cash flow

This curriculum will qualify students to take a standardized examination in business creativity, entrepreneurship and information technology and obtain a certificate.

b. Business Story Telling: Using cartoon construct and short films to achieve it.
c. Task Assignment/Role playing: Using composite of team stage drama that can be evaluated and rewarded.
d. Creating learning apps that teach didactics of basic knowledge and leads to suggestion of its business and entrepreneurship implications. Make the kids understand the concept and almost immediately start applying it to rewarding creativity. Such creativity could be set up stepwise to benefit the child maximum participation and attention.
e. Experiential Learning: Using arranged programs that make room for company tours and meeting with business owners to share in their experiences.
f. Inventive Problem Solving/Creativity: Illustrating with short business case studies that leave room for business and strategic planning, financial statements assessment, and basic tax and valuation procedures.
g. Practical Ventures of Profitability: Operation of vendor machine services and cafeteria ventures on school campuses by Junior Achievement Companies.
h. Mentoring: Teachers and stakeholders serving on the student-company boards as well as helping audit and monitor progress.
i. Running a virtual computer simulation project akin to their area of interest or possible job or skill prospect, which provides for each student real time evaluation and feedback. These will serve as training, testing, counseling and educating module.

4. Conclusion

Youth unemployment is a problem that many countries in the world including the United States are grappling with. Companies are no longer training their workers the way they used to do in the past. It has become a common practice these days that even young graduate applicants are required of employers to show proof of prior work experience. This is because most employers are not ready to embark on new employee training. The world Economic Forum 2014 noted that "as enterprises find it difficult to retain their current workforce and few new jobs are created, it becomes exceptionally difficult for those with no prior work experience to successfully enter the job market" (p.15). The tendency is that some of these graduates lacking prior work experience are compelled to go for jobs that are just available to them, which may sooner become stepping stones or continue to stay onboard as over-educated or under-educated, what Leuven & Ooterbeek (2011) referred to as "skill mismatch". Early entrepreneurship training offers practical experience and autonomy. That which employers tend to look for in young employees.

Research has shown that most individuals of the present generation are not willing to create jobs. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2012 report indicated that, one in five (20%) men intended to start a business in the next three years. On an even lower rating, only one in thirteen (7.7%) women expressed the intent (Kelley et al., 2012). The explanation given for the trend is in connection with child birth, especially for women of the ages 25 to 34. The evidence substantiating the difference is the comparable gap between the gender entrepreneurship intent at the youthful ages (18-24), where the reported gap is narrow. Where the youth are taught entrepreneurship early in life, most young girls are more likely to have the opportunity to create their own businesses before motherhood. Again, the young mothers may be able to work from home as skilled business owners.

The Business, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Teaching Interface (BEITI) holds great promise for economic growth in the future. The proposal focuses on innovation and high productivity, and the expertise it provides will permeate into various industries and sectors. Therefore the projection this proposal is making is very authentic and valid.

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Notes

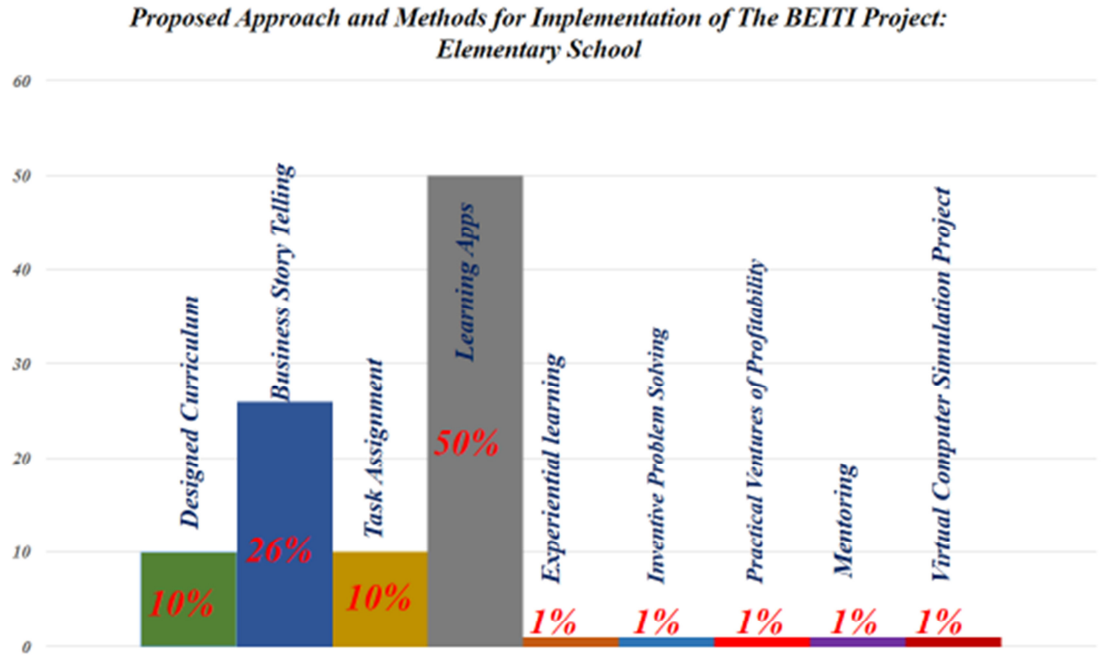

Figure 2: This figure shows our proposed approach for the implementation of The BEITI Project for Elementary School.

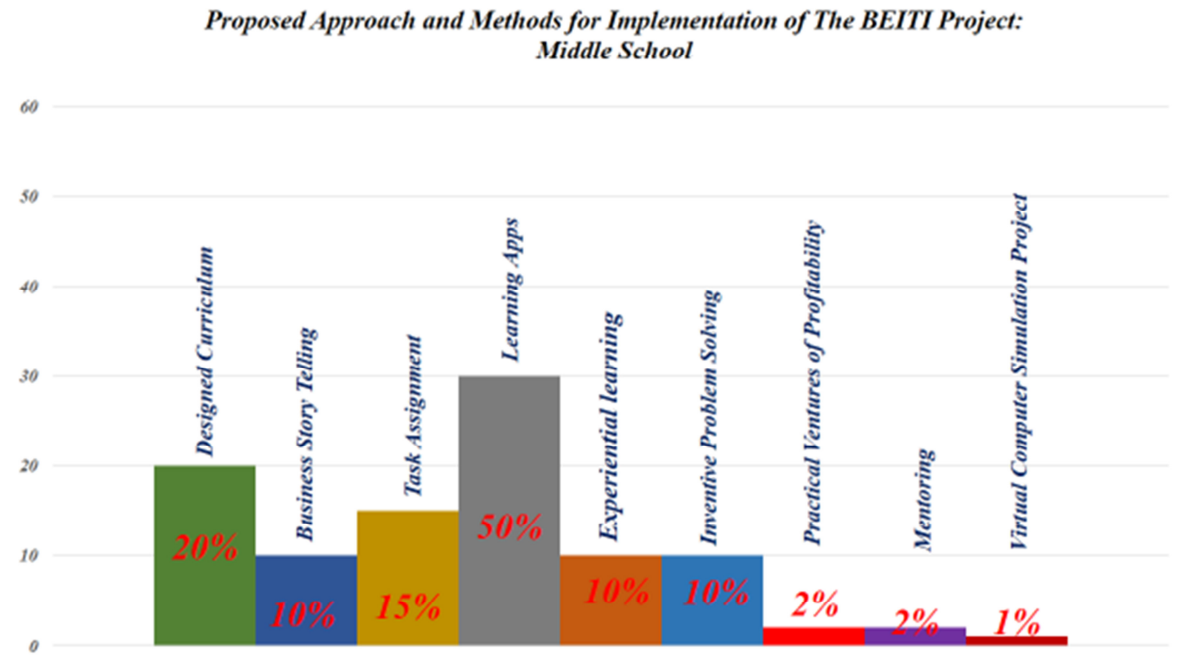

Figure 3: This figure shows our proposed approach for the implementation of The BEITI Project for Middle School.

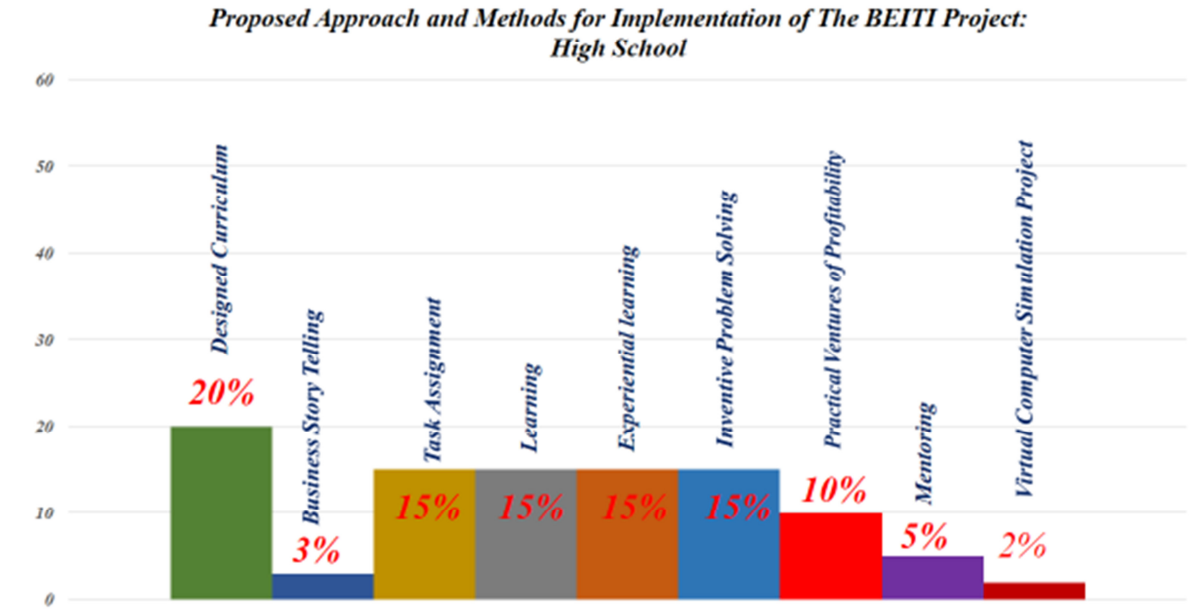

Figure 4: This figure shows our proposed approach for the implementation of The BEITI Project for High School.

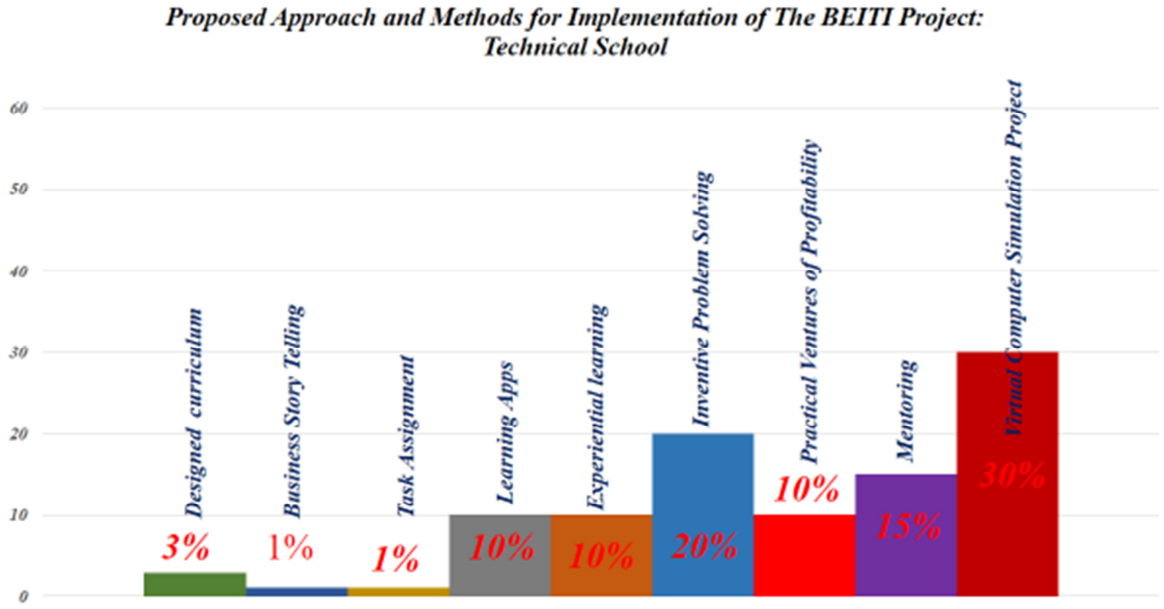

Figure 5: This figure shows our proposed approach for the implementation of The BEITI Project for T

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