

Future Focused: 5 Steps to Creating a Comprehensive Entrepreneurship Program for Students



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Introduction

Have you ever thought about where today's students will be in just five years? Students themselves certainly do.

Research indicates that high school students are more career focused than ever. They're not settling for simply mastering the basic subjects – English, writing, and math. They want classes and skills applicable to their own futures.

They're particularly interested in preparing for corporate careers and entrepreneurship. Some 72 percent of high school students want to start their own business. At least 61 percent expect to do so right after high school or college.

That makes educational programs to foster these passions a valuable addition to the curriculum.

Savvy schools are doing just that. By creating courses and programs to meet these interests, they're empowering students with the tools they need to be successful.

Entrepreneurship education represents a gap between what many schools offer and what their students want. Here's everything you need to know to get started changing that.



5 Steps to Developing an Entrepreneurship Program That Works

For years, we've partnered with schools to develop effective, impactful entrepreneurship programs that help prepare students for their future as business owners. These five steps were developed from the insights gleaned over the course of dozens of partnerships. When you apply these steps to the creation of your curriculum, you're leveraging techniques and approaches which are proven to work.

1. Encourage Access for Every Student

Get the word out early and universally across the campus of the new entrepreneurial education program available to students. Make it easy to sign up and emphasize that the program isn't just for students taking other business courses that the school may currently offer.

Consider making the program an elective course or scheduling it so that it doesn't conflict with other extracurricular activities.

Access to such education during high school is critical for those students with a serious interest in entrepreneurship. A 2019 study, entitled

The Young Entrepreneurs Study, found that late adolescence through young adulthood is the optimal time for promoting entrepreneurial intent.

During these years, students are particularly interested in possibility and potential. They're engaged in a phase of exploration that's still driven by the imagination of childhood.

Take advantage of this by leveraging the collective eagerness in the classroom. Students will motivate each other with their own excitement and drive. The most successful programs are those that are not just well designed, but also well attended.

2. Deploy Expert Guidance and Structure

Not sure where to start with the curriculum itself? Bring in experts who do.

Whether enlisting local businesses to participate or utilizing direct instruction driven by experts like at BridgePrep, make sure that your students are learning from industry experts in a balanced manner.

Generally, you should strive to include three elements in the foundation of your program:

- » **Insightful courses:** While the business industry changes and innovates, core concepts remain the same. Direct instruction can provide a clear, efficient transmission of the concepts and knowledge students need.
- » **Interactive learning:** Students learn best by doing rather than passive absorption of the material. Interactive experiences should support the concepts and tools gained during lessons. Think of it like how you structure science classes to involve both lectures and lab experiments. Some examples include simulations of entrepreneurial concepts or roleplaying situations that a business owner might be required to handle.
- » **Real-world simulations:** Cultivate student passion for entrepreneurship by encouraging them to try their hand in real-world situations. Include scenarios in which they write business plans, proposals, or budgets for actual business opportunities in which they're interested. Develop activities to identify market gaps or other opportunities that really exist. Encourage students to take their knowledge out of the classroom and into the terrain wherein it's applicable.



3. Support Contextualized Experiences

Contextual learning is a school of thought that emphasizes the presentation of materials in such a way that students are able to develop meaning according to their own life experiences. In other words, it's a way for students to personalize the learning experience, taking away from the material personally significant lessons.

Contextualized experiences in education are widely used across a variety of subjects directly applicable to the real world. From literacy programs to workplace education, this style of teaching is scientifically shown to improve many skills that entrepreneurs need to master to be successful. These include:

- » Creative problem solving
- » Self-regulated learning
- » Self-direction and motivation
- » Bias identification
- » Teamwork and collaboration
- » Appreciation of perspective
- » Situational awareness

Learning is an active process, and no two startups or businesses are exactly the same. Create lessons, scenarios, and assignments that encourage each student to take away the most valuable insights according to his or her unique entrepreneurial interests.



4. Limit the Resource Burden for Staff and Administrators

Adopting a new program in a school can be expensive, and school districts are already being asked to do more with less. With BridgePrep as a partner, adding an entrepreneurship education program enhances the education experience your school offers without creating additional budgeting pressures.

We accomplish this with comprehensive career readiness software – one program that provides applications, guidance, and the tools you need to create an impactful program.

This software is fully customizable according to your specific curriculum. You can create an engaging, effective program that takes advantage of:

- » Personality assessments and career suggestions for each student
- » Individually oriented career maps
- » A resume builder that walks students through finding the best words and layout to showcase their accomplishments
- » A business plan generator to help students get started on their big ideas
- » Quizzes to test knowledge
- » Certificates of completion and mastery for different modules and concepts.

With our adaptive technology, your program will have exactly what it needs to deliver the most value to students.



5. Emphasize Exposure and Skill Building

Through a combination of classroom and real-world experience, you'll create a balanced program that empowers students to pursue their dreams successfully. But don't stop there – make sure to emphasize exposure to real situations that encourage the development of soft skills at every opportunity.

We've found that many entrepreneurship programs spend too much time teaching from the book and not enough time helping students build the auxiliary skills they need to be successful business owners. That's why emphasizing exposure is the single most important thing you can do to separate your entrepreneur program from those found at other schools.

If running a business was simply a matter of applying formulas, every business would be successful. In reality, successful entrepreneurs must master a wide range of skills that might not be obvious until a situation arises that calls for them. These skills might include:

- » Conflict resolution
- » Negotiation
- » Time management
- » Leadership
- » Interpersonal communication
- » Computer literacy
- » Active listening
- ... Plus much, much more.

Learning is an active process, and these are skills that can't be learned from a lecture or a textbook. Don't let students discover they lack a skill until they need it. Send them into the world prepared and confident in their ability to overcome any challenge.

Summary: Bridge the Learning Gap With BridgePrep

BridgePrep is proud to be among the forerunners bridging the gap between student interests and the school curriculum. We partner with schools to build comprehensive, insightful entrepreneurship programs that empower students to succeed.

What's our secret? We combine thoughtful courses, interactive lessons, and real-world situational exercises to create a well-rounded, experiential learning opportunity.

It works. A [2016 study](#) found that the presence of an entrepreneurship education program significantly enhances the likelihood that students will go on to start their own businesses.

It's the goal of every educator to positively impact a student's future. Partner with BridgePrep to make that goal a reality.

Start the conversation now. [Reach out to us directly](#), or find us on:



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