

TITLE

Developing collaborative approaches to learning about business

VISION (ASPIRATION AND AIMS)

- to develop collaborative approaches to learning about business in young people and add to their competitiveness in the job market through engagement in real, relevant and purposeful tasks

BACKGROUND MOTIVATION STATEMENT

As the fallout of the financial crisis is set to continue, many EU countries are facing massive debts and high spending cuts, which is affecting the job market and decreasing young people's chances of employment. This activity will support students to develop collaborative approaches to business and to gain practical experience of setting up and developing a business idea.

NARRATIVE

I design activities through which my students can identify a business idea and together we map it onto the school curriculum. We then develop creative ways to address and work towards this idea. Students choose one or more business ideas in which they are interested and that support development of their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through real-life, authentic tasks (eg designing new products or setting up a service). I also explore the cross-curricular potential of these activities because the business idea includes tasks from a range of subjects, including data analysis (eg supply and demand), marketing, business planning and writing.

Throughout the activity I take the role of facilitator and business consultant. My students and I set up a virtual 'hatchery' where the students can develop, share and nurture the ideas they want to 'hatch'. In the past, I have created a hatchery in a corner of my classroom where ideas are shared with post-it notes and I have also used a virtual space on the school intranet. We have led the development of a local bank of 'ambassadors', which consists of parents, local businesses, and schools who will support the students in their projects. Students ideally also access a support network of internationally based peers and experts via an online community and a series of webinars and events. With the guidance of and external experts, peers and me, students build on the initial challenge and bring it to a conclusion as agreed with me as the teacher. Students present their results to a panel of ambassadors and to the online community for feedback and ideas for further development.

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TREND/S

The financial crisis continues – The fallout of the financial crisis is set to continue, with many EU countries facing massive debts and making big spending cuts. At present, this is affecting the job market and is decreasing young people’s chances to access jobs.

The rise of Asia - China and India are educating more engineers and scientists than the US and Europe combined, and this gap is likely to increase in the future, leading to fiercer competition on the global job market for high-value jobs. This trend, combined with the enduring difference in labour costs between Western and Asian countries, is having a negative impact on young graduates’ opportunities in Europe, as many companies can hire from a wider pool at a lower cost.

KEY CONCEPTS

21st century skills, authentic learning, student-driven, nurturing creativity, mapped to curriculum

ENVIRONMENT

- communication across the local community including parents and businesses to access experts/peer mentoring
- ‘hatchery’ – separate space within the classroom/school or online where ideas can be ‘hatched’

PEOPLE & ROLES

- ambassadors: to include parents, successful business people, positive role models, local industry people, local decision makers; evaluate student projects
- students: will experience a variety of business roles, direct and plan own learning, choose topic related to interests, support others
- teachers: act as business consultants, coordinate activity, support students, access ambassadors

INTERACTIONS (INCL. PEDAGOGIES)

- group-based activities
- cross-curricula opportunities
- role-play
- problem-based enquiry

ACTIVITIES

- students undertake relevant and purposeful activities related to the task
- webinars/events
- authentic problem/enquiry-based activity to develop business skills and understanding

RESOURCES (INCL. TECHNOLOGIES)

- ‘people bank’ and online community space - a network of teachers, experts and classrooms, always on and easily customisable and expandable
- series of related webinars/online events
- ‘hatchery’ space