

The GOAL Post

Entrepreneurship issue

Viewpoint

Entrepreneurial mindset creates student "doers"

by Daniel Gallagher, Principal, Gaspé Polyvalent

Pilot project

In late 2011, high schools across Québec were invited to apply to become part of a pilot project aimed at building the entrepreneurial capacity of their region. Gaspé Polyvalent was one of 11 schools chosen.

At Gaspé Poly, entrepreneurship doesn't necessarily involve setting up a business. It's more about being an active doer in your community.

Consequently, our submission to the Réseau québécois des écoles entrepreneuriales et environnementales includes several

projects meant to develop in our students the social leadership and organizational ability that will sustain our community from one generation to the next. These projects include our feeder elementary schools and the community as a whole. They put the theme of sustainable development front and centre. And their success depends on our sitting down with business and community partners to identify what local assets we can realistically draw on immediately and long term.

One project seeks to diminish our ecological footprint by creating inter-generational community gardens on school property. Another venture involves a local cabinet maker showing students how to make an Afro-Peruvian-type drum out of recycled materials. A third initiative will enable our

high school students could use math to calculate how much land is available for agriculture. History students might report on how land in our area has been used over time. Drummers could perform live at community events and even market their new product over the internet. Language and art classes



Preparing to greet their first cruise ship: These students from Gaspé Polyvalent just completed 30 hours of training given by Groupe Collegia (the continuing education arm of a consortium of local CEGEPs). It's all part of a pilot project in which they will act as bilingual ambassadors to visiting tourists.

students to shine by acting as bilingual guides to the cruise ship passengers that visit Gaspé.

could develop flyers, Web content and posters to promote their community.

When students feel they have something to offer their community and are respected for it, their capacity as change agents awakens. Then school truly becomes a place from which communities evolve and grow.

Students as change agents

Each initiative gives us a tool for enhancing what is already taking place in our classrooms. Think how science could come alive as elementary students learn to sow seeds and care for a garden. Or how

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Making Dreams Come True

A perfect fit with GOAL

This issue of *The GOAL Post* is dedicated to entrepreneurship. Why? Because students engaged in entrepreneurial activity are living the guidance-oriented approach to learning. GOAL puts learning into real-life contexts that make sense to kids and spark excitement. What could be more real than students applying their knowledge to innovative projects that meet a need that they themselves have defined?



Students at Nesbitt School in Montréal embodied the entrepreneurial spirit by writing and illustrating their own books. By sharing their stories with these younger children, they hope to instill a love of books in kids of all ages and abilities.



This teacher believes in “leading by following”

“If we truly want kids to be the critical thinkers and problem solvers we claim we want them to be, we have to give them opportunities to try.”

— Katharine Childs

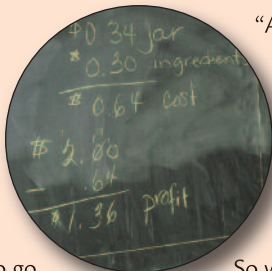
Katharine Childs is a big believer in contextual learning. When a grade 4 class she taught at **Nesbitt School** in Montréal was struggling with fractions, she had them measure out the ingredients to a Paula Deen seasoning mix recipe that she had found on the internet. The kids had fun; they took the finished seasoning mix home to their parents; and they grasped the concept of fractions.

More gym equipment needed

That initiative grew into a full-fledged entrepreneurial project when students complained one day that there were never enough balls to go around at recess. Katharine suggested they ask the gym teachers why this was so. The latter explained there was only so much money available for gym equipment. The students came back to Katharine and said, “We want to raise \$200 to

buy more balls so that everyone can have a turn.” “Well, how would you like to do that?” she asked. “We could make more seasoning mix and sell it,” came the response.

“I have never seen such enthusiasm”



“A project only becomes entrepreneurial when children themselves come up with a solution to something they feel is a real need,” says Katharine. From then on, the kids ran with their idea, while Katharine made the links to the curriculum.

So while the students were defining their product (they expanded to several spices and dips); figuring out how much they needed to sell and at what price; writing a letter to Paula Deen to get permission to use the recipe; measuring out ingredients; deciding on packaging and bilingual labelling; and keeping a journal of their

progress, they were also practising their math and oral and written communication in both French and English. And they were developing their teamwork, problem-solving, organizational skills and other cross-curricular competencies.

Katharine has worked on entrepreneurial projects with students from kindergarten to adult education. “Most students are at risk because they are not involved in their learning,” she says. “But when we do these projects, I have never seen such enthusiasm.”



Learning became fun as Nesbitt students prepared their “Sips and Dips” mixes.

Entrepreneurship Q & A

Q: What makes a project entrepreneurial?

A: To be truly entrepreneurial, a project must fill an actual need that students themselves have identified. It should also lead to a student-generated product, service or event that benefits the school or community and has links to the curriculum.

Q: Is asking students to make decorations for their classroom windows an entrepreneurial project?

A: No. But if you say, “This is our classroom. What can we do to make it more comfortable for us?” you’re giving students the go-ahead to articulate what they see as a real need and how they might address it. Then you have the beginnings of an entrepreneurial project.

Q: Do entrepreneurial projects have to involve selling something?

A: No, more often than not, they result in a student-run service being offered within the school or larger community. To realize their projects, students will draw on principles of good business (planning, teamwork, promotion, quality control, evaluation, etc.). They might even stage an event to raise money in support of a specific cause. But learning and confidence-building, not raising money, are the primary aims of an entrepreneurial project.



Student entrepreneurship takes many forms



Brigitte Mital, a physical education teacher at **Mountainview School** in Otterburn Park, got her students thinking entrepreneurial when she mentioned Health Canada’s concern that children were not doing enough physical activity. “What could we do about that?” she asked them.

They suggested games at lunch and a core group of Cycle 3 students took it upon themselves to organize various sports—cosom hockey, soccer, badminton, dodge ball, etc.—for other

kids in the school. Realizing that not all the children were into these sports, the group proposed adding circus, dance and gymnastics to the list of offerings. These activities proved so popular that they spun off into a separate project. Using circus balls, unicycles and other equipment Brigitte borrowed from other schools, students created, directed and produced two shows for the whole school.

“Ninety per cent of our students were involved in extra-curricular physical activity,” says Brigitte. “The beauty of it was that it was all kid-led.”

Students entertained the whole school with their home-grown circus show. (Profits will ensure that Mountainview gets its own circus equipment.)





Teachers say they benefit, too

Studies show that students involved in entrepreneurial projects gain self-confidence and are more motivated to learn. But there are also significant benefits for teachers.

A Québec Entrepreneurship Contest's survey of participants in its Valoris* initiative found that:

- ★ 91% of teachers interviewed said that being involved in an entrepreneurial project increased their enjoyment of teaching.
- ★ 83% said that carrying out an entrepreneurial project had enabled them to achieve their teaching goals in a different way.
- ★ All the teachers felt that the project had made it easier for them to incorporate educational content in a way that gave meaning to students' learning.
- ★ 56% said that carrying out an entrepreneurial project had helped improve their class management.
- ★ 93% said that the project had brought their students together around a shared goal.

** The Valoris initiative helps implement entrepreneurial projects in elementary and secondary schools located in disadvantaged areas. The teachers surveyed came from 10 Capitale-Nationale and Chaudière-Appalaches schools involved in Valoris in 2009.*

Need more copies of The GOAL Post?

Contact **Doris Kerec** at LEARN.
Telephone : 1-888-622-2212
or e-mail < dkerec@learnquebec.ca >.



Math + entrepreneurship = lasting impact on students

By carrying out a business project of their own invention, these Pointe Claire students are learning not just how to DO math, but when and how to USE it.

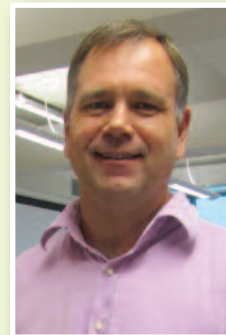
Every grade 8 student in the International Baccalaureate program at **St. Thomas High School** receives the same math assignment each September: come up with a business plan, put it into action and make a profit that will triple your initial investment by the spring.

Some students organize in-school bake sales. One young man built bird houses and sold them door to door. Two students this year are running a ball-hockey league for grades 7 and 8, charging \$5 per competitor. All profits from the projects are donated to charity.

“In the real world, there are many different answers . . .”

“Students often know how to do math, but they don't know what to do with it,” says teacher **Lars Nyberg**. Doing a business project teaches them how to apply their knowledge. They have to figure out which combination of costs, product quantities and sales will lead to the desired profit. They have to prepare balance sheets and income statements.

Throughout their project, students keep a journal of their thinking at each step. They record the problems they encounter and the strategies they use to solve them. They also submit an end-of-project reflection. “This is where most of their learning is exemplified,” says Lars. “Some of the best projects may just break even, but the thinking that goes into them can be quite remarkable.”



Through teachers such as Lars Nyberg, the grade 8 business project is weaving a culture of entrepreneurship through the school.

In the end, it's not about making a profit; it's about kids grasping concepts that will stay with them a lifetime. “In traditional math situational problems, there are only a couple of things you can do and only one answer that's right,” says Lars. “Our students are discovering that in the real world, there are many different answers and many different ways to get there.”

How a career fair goes entrepreneurial

Brent Callahan knew it was time for a different approach when his Secondary III students' only comment on a career fair they attended was: “It was big.”

So now, each year, he asks his Personal Orientation Project (POP) class at **Beaconsfield High School** if they'd like to organize their own in-school fair for grades 8 to 10. “I can talk till I'm blue in the face, but to engage students, we have to help them find their passion and then let them take control,” says Brent.

“They really take ownership”

His students rise to the challenge and set up committees to handle logistics, presenters, food, advertising and security. Last year, they surveyed other classes to see which types of presenters they should invite. An email to the school board got them extra tables, and a sponsorship request to a local fast-food chain resulted in a free lunch for all attendees. The POP students not only experience what it takes to be event organizers, they also get ideas from the presenters for their next career exploration.

“They really take ownership and make sure that every presenter is kept busy,” says Brent. “Other



(Photo: M. Heddo)

By pairing themselves with presenters and helping to greet students, POP students interested in a particular field get in extra networking time.

grades and classes appreciate that the organizers have listened to what they wanted. And with the POP students taking care of security, teachers are less rushed and have time to network with presenters and even arrange visits to their classes.”

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Free toolkits will get you started

Entrepreneurial projects can be integrated into the curriculum in any subject or grade level. What's more, help getting started is just an email away.

Katherine Korakakis and the team of entrepreneurship awareness and promotion officers at the **Carrefours jeunesse-emploi (CJE)** across Québec are a great resource for entrepreneurial-minded teachers. Mandated under Québec's Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge to encourage an entrepreneurial culture, they will gladly help teachers of any subject, from kindergarten onwards, familiarize their students with the many forms that entrepreneurship can take. Depending on your needs, they can introduce you to a variety of free resources and toolkits that have been produced and tested with the help of teachers and other educators from both French and English school boards

Highly transferable skills

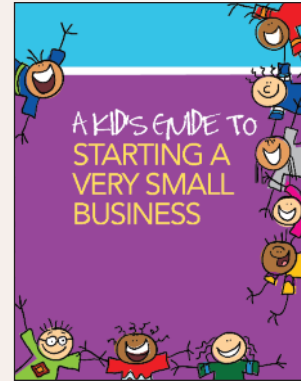
"The biggest myth I come across in talking to teachers is that entrepreneurship is only about making money," says Katherine. In fact, she is far more concerned about developing students' initiative, responsibility, creativity, decision-making and teamwork—"all skills

inherent in starting a successful business, but also easily transferable to any aspect of life."

The agents at the CJE will also guide teachers and students who want to participate in the annual Québec Entrepreneurship Contest. For more information, contact **Katherine Korakakis**, provincial coordinator for the English sector, at 514-393-9155 or email katherine@cjeresseau.org

Mark this date!

The deadline for submitting projects to the 15th annual **Québec Entrepreneurship Contest** is **4:00 p.m. Monday, March 18, 2013.**



This is just one of the toolkits available through CJE.

The Incubator gets those creative juices flowing

The Incubator: Your Project Launching Workshop (www.321incubator.com) is a well-designed tool that high school teachers can use to stimulate students' entrepreneurial ideas. No teacher training is required, as the kit includes a DVD, animated by two young hosts, that guides students through a series of easy-to-follow exercises. The kit was created by **Sam Asmar**, an entrepreneurial promotion and awareness agent with *Carrefour jeunesse-emploi de l'Ouest-de-l'Île* (and a former LBPSB teacher).

In the space of three to four hours, students—working in teams—come up with project ideas that respond to a need they perceive in their school or community. They identify the



The GOAL Post is also available in PDF format on the GOAL Web site at www.learnquebec.ca/goal

pros and cons of their proposal and assign tasks, inspired by their own talents and interests. The kit also prepares them to present and defend their proposal to the rest of the class, and it comes with tools for tracking responsibilities, budgets and timelines.

During a recent workshop on GOAL and Entrepreneurship, **Mount Bruno Elementary School's Stephanie Domes** was among several educators who tested the kit. "The *Incubator* is motivating for both students and teachers alike due to its easy, step-by-step format and attractive design," she notes. "I look forward to trying it out with my Cycle 3 students."

Test it yourself!

Copies of *The Incubator* were distributed to all high school libraries throughout Québec. If you can't locate it in your school, contact your GOAL representative. You can also check with info@321incubator.com

Mount Bruno Elementary School teachers **Stephanie Domes** (right) and **Roxanne McNeil** were part of a team that "incubated" a project to involve students in redesigning a school playground.

