

## **Engaging Young Entrepreneurs @ Middle School-Using the Pitches of Peers-Digital Literacy Training**

**Often teachers are too focused on the disparate separate trees of multiple ELA standards and texts, to see the forest of multi-content real world, financial, social and personal talent opportunities. Ironically although few ELA or even Social Studies teaching curricula maps include specific writing, reading, document, research or discussion units focused on entrepreneurship, teaching entrepreneurship during ELA and SS sessions authenticates all these skills, while activating student voice, choice and agency.**

**However, how can subject content teachers infuse this forest of real world of global commerce and leadership, into their skills objectives aligned classrooms. Actually, the teacher texts and voices of relatable peers who can make these skills real for students are just a click away.**

**Here's how to teach standards rich entrepreneurship addressing instructional objectives, asking questions and key connecting students to proactive success as literate owners and customers in the real world. See standards in parentheses.**

- 1. Survey what the students already know and feel about their current potential connection with the field of entrepreneurship. Give them a short list of basic vocabulary including profit, loss, business plan, pitch, marketing, investment, patent, equity, royalties, expenses, net profit, and gross profit (academic vocabulary). Either a full class discussion can be held with student comments saved to a dated word**

**document for revisiting at the end of this project or if desired so that students themselves earn the impact of this adventure, their initial responses can be uploaded or handwritten for individual authentic impact assessment.**

**Conclude the written survey with the opportunity for the students to discuss the Essential Question of whether, as under age 18 young citizens, they can be active real world entrepreneurs or is that an opportunity that needs to wait until they become adults? A second Essential Question to pose would be does an entrepreneur have to invent a new business product, concept, or service? Can the entrepreneur simply run with an already existing product, concept or service and do it really well for profit? Make certain as the students respond aloud or in writing to these questions that they explain their feelings or knowledge about these real world issues (synthesize ideas through writing). Whether the individual student responses are saved for revisit or just key student contributed quotes is up to the teacher.**

- 2. With prior knowledge and attitudes surveyed, plunge into digital literacy viewing. Select a grade and age appropriate peer entrepreneur digital resource from these (analyze media). Get one who is highly relatable for the students.**

**Resources: 3 Youngest Shark Tank Entrepreneurs**

**<https://youtu.be/UalwiiFEUi4?si=HOaycOXOVD7bWKd>**

**The Sharks are intrigued by kids creation-**

**The measuring Shovel**

**<https://youtu.be/XNaQCOsoHlc?si=df3tMGFEozTuzHrz>**

**Shark Tank US/Sharks are Shocked at 13 year old entrepreneur's Negotiating Skills on You Tube**

**<https://youtu.be/uGqOFKtqT7w?si=tfqAdtBj6IDgvTxg>**

**Kid Entrepreneur Kills It in the Shark Tank**

**[https://youtu.be/XWpki\\_TNOqO?si=tjkuaYUkNnSTiPqx](https://youtu.be/XWpki_TNOqO?si=tjkuaYUkNnSTiPqx)**

**Top 3 Pitches from 3 Young Entrepreneurs**

**<https://youtu.be/BFHup7BqXgl?si=TLj6k-hiDYkzELII>**

**Whichever of these resources selected for class discussion, focus only on a single peer young entrepreneur. Divide that digital story into segments of no more than 2 minutes each. Pre-target the student viewing to the following discussion questions (analyze and evaluate arguments):**

- a) What product or service is the young entrepreneur pitching?**
- b) What are the key talking points or details being presented by the entrepreneur to promote shark investment into the business idea?**
- c) In addition to the talking pitch, what art, artifacts, or other methods/moves are being used by the entrepreneur to pitch? Which of these components-talk, art, video, movement, and artifact-is most effective? Why?**
- d) Given this entrepreneur is your age, do you feel that you currently have the skills and capability to pitch a business? Explain whether you feel you too could make a pitch or not?**

**Target vocabulary: Be prepared to explain the nuance meaning of these words in entrepreneurship: profit, loss, investment, return, royalty, pitch, plan,**

**gross, net profit, expenses, inventory (academic vocabulary).**

- 3. Let the students answer the questions covered in the digital story of the selected entrepreneur. Facilitate with reference to the digital story the correct details of the particular business presented and with reference to the context of the story have the students “define” the entrepreneurship vocabulary meanings as identified in the story. Encourage the students to discuss the extent to which they given that that they are peers of these entrepreneurs might parallel them and make impressive entrepreneurial pitches. Do not make any judgment for them and state that there is no single correct answer to that question. Do challenge them to come up with the extent to which “pitches” are part of required middle school and beyond curriculum as: whole class presentations of projects, debate speeches, soapbox speeches, student leadership council comments, poster making, fund raising in school or afterschool clubs for approved humanitarian or other local causes, town hall or peace-able protest events.**
- 4. Tell the students that having watched their age peers successfully pitch to and swim with the sharks; they now have the chance to begin to hone their entrepreneurial powers. Divide them into groups of no more than three or four students. Tell them the goal of this group entrepreneurial think tank exercise is to develop within two periods of group work a viable “pitch” presentation for a business service or product**

**that could then be adapted or approved for “investment” or adult “shark” support, could be implemented as part of an after school or lunchtime or neighborhood effort (write an argument).**

- 5. Invite and confirm a local business owner or school parent businessperson or even a school vendor with a contract to be the “shark” investor. A panel of two or three such adults not part of the school staff will authenticate the project making middle school entrepreneurial presents come alive.**
- 6. Have the students use their first session to assign roles of recorder, graphics designer, numbers person and marketer. Encourage them to watch the entire set of approved resources as research and share any other secondary resources appropriate for the class (analyzing mentor digital informational texts).**
- 7. By the second session, make certain to check in with the groups and if desired record or have a student videographer and photographer record or photograph the planned pitches and ideas (collaborative writing and listening).**
- 8. On the set day, for the pitches (session 4) have the “shark” team seated or in attendance via zoom with short intros to explain how they got into their businesses and at what age. Also, allow each of them to explain what that individual would consider criterion for a successful pitch.**
- 9. Model the event as closely as possible within the classroom or a meeting room to the shark set up, which the students have used as an anchor digital text. Make**

**certain the entire group walk in as a team even if only one serves as the pitch spokesperson (speaking and listening).**

**10. Encourage the shark team to guide and to kindly facilitate the pitches, so that the end result is that students feel they have put their entrepreneurial toes and selves into the waters and started to swim with the sharks. Have a videographer/recorder available for the students after each group presents for their reaction (reflect and extend knowledge). Of course, an entrepreneurial truth also exists that, many turned down pitches emerge as vast successes because the entrepreneur believed in the idea, despite the reaction of the investor.**

**Beyond the ready to upload to the school website or grade one, photos, videos and actual artifacts of the pitches, what have the students exited from this “swimming “with local neighborhood shark investors’ investment of their actual business expertise? No, they do not get actual cash or commitments as did the peer entrepreneurs in their digital texts, but they did get a boot camp, collaborative entrepreneurial memorable to the max experience of the real world developing of a business idea. Whether they enjoy ELA writing, speaking, listening, research and teaming or working with exact academic domain vocabulary or conventions of economics or documents, they experienced these aspects of ELA, SS, Math and media as they function in the real world of making a living. Some might actually realize their pitches**

**as part of a school approved fundraising or local community entrepreneurial service or be inspired to shadow one of the adults or interview them. Ironically this dip into “not on the middle school “ ELA, SS or Mathematics curricula unit map, will make all those parenthetically noted skills and standards come real world alive for students. Connecting students to the real world as soon as possible and proving to them that the skills middle school teachers teach are not just for standard tests, but necessary to achieve a financially and personally gratifying life, are the essence of middle school teaching. SO, middle school teachers, venture out into the ocean of real world content connections. Allow and encourage your students as you “lifeguard” watch them to use your content skills to begin “swimming with the sharks.” The students will be the more excited after this dip in the sea of entrepreneurial possibilities to master your curriculum skills, now that they “know” how these skills will empower and enrich their “swim” through adult life.**

**Resources:**

**Print Books-**

**Money Matters Made Easy**

<https://moneymattersmadeeasy.org>

**What does it mean to be an entrepreneur?**

<https://g.co/kgs/211fB7R>

**Kids Start-Up: How YOU Can Become an Entrepreneur**

<https://a.co/d/6f0ZpTa>