

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP INVESTIGATION (ESI)
CURRENT VISION**

The project was first envisioned April 2003 in response to the question, “What would be different within a 4-H Entrepreneur Project.”

Mission. Youth will 1) learn to think as an entrepreneur at a very young age and 2) to help youth identify success as remaining in their own communities as an entrepreneur.

Methodology: It will be 1) accessible and affordable to any one any time any place; 2) it is competency based and sequential—youth can explore opportunities through starting their own business; 3) it is community-based; and 4) it utilizes technology as a management and marketing tool.

Audience: Youth 10 – 19 through home schools, youth organizations, schools and 4-H clubs. It can also be used by local community organizations/associations to promote youth entrepreneurs and extension community resource development educators. This is especially designed to aid rural communities in their economic development efforts and to keep youth in rural communities.

Partners: 1) Congressman Tom Osborne’s Office; 2) Home Town Competitiveness; 3) NET Force; 4) Nebraska Department of Education; 5) Nebraska 4-H and Extension and 6) UN-L Departments including the Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI) and the Nebraska’s Rural Initiative.

Overview

Imagine that any youth can now explore the endless opportunities of becoming an entrepreneur at any age, any grade, any location. any time and in any subject area. Imagine that any community can now help youth learn to become entrepreneurs without the restrictions of what courses, clubs and civic organizations are available within their community. What would a curriculum look like that would allow individuals to experiment with their own skills and interests? How could you teach youth the components of entrepreneurship as well as how to use technology as a tool and resource? Welcome to Nebraska 4-H curriculum: EntrepreneurShip Investigation (ESI).

ESI is developed with four audiences in mind: 4-H clubs, middle school and high school classes and youth organizations (it is aligned to school standards), extension community resource development educators and local community economic development organization/agencies. The overarching goals are for youth to think like an entrepreneur at a very young age and to help youth understand that they can control where they want to live by being their own employer.

Perhaps the most unique feature is that the curriculum is community friendly. Care is given for the youth to explore and involve their own community in search of its history, culture and opportunities. Technology is treated as a tool and resource. A CD-ROM provides enrichment activities and a web site contains appropriate links.

4-H Youth Entrepreneurship Curriculum – Integrating Projects with Entrepreneurship
University of Nebraska-Lincoln 4-H Extension

Imagine that you are in extension working with youth, communities and economic development. ESI is a tool available for you to make a difference both within your community and with individual lives.

What makes this project unique? Scope and Sequence!

The Entrepreneurial 4-H project will allow individuals to systematically build entrepreneurial skills as they complete entrepreneurial lessons and activities.

Taken as a single level or as a combined package, the curriculum gives youth opportunity to explore entrepreneurship as a career option. Youth can incorporate the curriculum with selected 4-H projects (horizontal focus) or select one project and develop greater breadth and knowledge about their chosen area of interest and business (vertical focus).

Evaluation will be an integral part of the youth curriculum. Stakeholders will first identify outcomes and expectations for the entrepreneurship curricula. Data collection tools will be designed that captures youths' skill development, changing aspirations and potentially a decade of entrepreneurial education outcomes (information that is not currently available).

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ABOUT 4-H

4-H Mission

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

4-H is the Extension System’s dynamic, non-formal, educational program for today’s young people. Adults are involved as volunteers working with youth as leaders or on committees and boards providing the framework for 4-H. The educational philosophy of the 4-H program is that young people learn best when they are involved in their learning. The intent is to do, reflect, and apply.

Nationally, 4-H is one of the largest youth organizations with more than 6.8 million participants and more than 610,595 youth and adult volunteers working directly and indirectly with the program. Universally recognized by its four-leaf clover emblem, 4-H serves youth through a variety of methods including organized clubs, school-enrichment groups, special interest groups, individual study programs, camps, school-age child care programs, and instructional television programs. To date, more than 45 million people are 4-H alumni.

4-H in Nebraska

Nebraska 4-H is open to all youth, ages 5-19, and adults. More than 400 Extension staff across the state serve as primary contacts for the more than 122,000 youth and 20,000 volunteers.

Nebraska 4-H has received national recognition for being on the “cutting edge” in technology through its Cyber Fair activities, technology programming, and its technology team. It has a proven record of successfully linking education and volunteers within every county in Nebraska.

Advantages of 4-H

- 4-H facilitates the connection between community, business, projects and families.
- 4-H connects youth with non-formal education outside of the school system.
- 4-H provides educational and experiential learning that help students develop positive behaviors and skills.
- 4-H works with community volunteers to identify local needs.
- 4-H helps youth develop decision-making skills, and clarify their ideas and values.
- 4-H benefits youth through the development of interpersonal skills with peers outside of their classroom and school system.
- 4-H provides youth access to multiple caring adults, who provide guidance, direction, and feedback that reinforces parental efforts.

HISTORY OF THE 4-H ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT

7/03 – Initial “Brainstorming” of Concept

Team Members – Patricia Fairchild, Diane Vigna, Carol Thayer, Bob Meduna

Recommendations –

- Create an entrepreneurship curriculum (four levels and one leaders’ guide) which will be available for all projects and for all ages 5 - 19. Entrepreneurship could include: awareness, exploration and simulation. Integrate entrepreneurship within all curricula.
- Create a Nebraska 4-H Kids E (Entrepreneurship) Network.
- Create case studies and capture success stories.
- Entrepreneurship curriculum can be for-profit business or non-profit organizations.
- Every 4-H Project could incorporate an entrepreneur and finance component.
- Curriculum could use free Opensource.org software to reduce costs to student
- Create entrepreneurial mentoring opportunities across generations.

12/04 – 4-H Entrepreneurship Concept forwarded

Writer – Carol Thayer, UNL Cooperative Extension Entrepreneurship Specialist

4-H Entrepreneurship Education concept forwarded to Dean Elbert Dickey for approval.

1/05 – 4-H Entrepreneurship Focus Group

Participants - extension educators, community representatives and economic developers

The result was an identification of four key concepts:

- Curriculum must be flexible and individually-based.
- Curriculum must provide age-appropriate education and build on skills of earlier levels.
- The community must be involved in the education of aspiring youth entrepreneurs.
- Mentors are crucial to provide models, guidance and encouragement of youth.

1/05 – 4/05 – Base curriculum draft

Curriculum Development Writer – Carol Thayer,

Curriculum provides three levels of life skill and competency development centered around segments on Discovery, Concept development, Resourcing, Start-up and Future Planning.

Summer 05 – “No Place like Nebraska” & “E-commerce/Entrepreneurship Activities” draft

Curriculum Developers – Lois Dietsch, Seward Middle School and Dennis Kahl, Cooperative Extension.

The curriculum is designed to help develop a positive attitude about job opportunities that provide a good living in rural Nebraska and develop business technology skills. The curriculum has been piloted in the classroom.

7/05 – 12/05 – Focus Group sessions – Community and Youth Entrepreneurship

Grad. Student – Nathan Hamen, Advisors – Patricia Fairchild, Kay Rockwell and Diane Vigna

Participants – Stakeholders in Aurora, Geneva and David City.

Data indicated general interest in youth entrepreneurship opportunities and education.

Participants suggested improved community awareness and involvement, mentor opportunities and flexibility in program delivery and participant entry.

Current – 4-H partners with Agricultural Economics

Project Leaders – Patricia Fairchild, Diane Vigna, Marilyn Schlake, Charlotte Narjes

- Program Planning Session – January 19
- Curriculum Planning Session – January 27 or January 31