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CREATING INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM FOR FUTURE LEADERS FOCUSING ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



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Creating Interdisciplinary and Innovative Curriculum for Future Leaders Focusing on Entrepreneurship and Positive Youth Development

Synopsis:

This workshop introduces two award winning programs using interdisciplinary strategies, service-learning, and experiential learning concepts to motivate and guide youth (K-12 and 18-25) in engaging in entrepreneurial training and positive youth development.

Creating Interdisciplinary and Innovative Curriculum for Future Leaders Focusing on Entrepreneurship and Positive Youth Development

Presentation Description

This presentation will share two of the Best Practices of the Year Award programs recognized by the National Small Business Institute, ***Teens Reaching Youth (TRY) for Food Systems and Dollar Enterprise at the University of Vermont.*** These two programs offer a combined experiential learning, service learning, and entrepreneurial leadership training opportunity that is youth-led (grades 8-12 and college students) and mentor-guided to teach the functions and interactions of life sciences and social sciences with respect to farm, food, and energy issues to younger children (grades 3-5). Both programs give overlapping generations of youth the opportunity to become agents of positive change in their communities and families, and it creates a feeder program for 500+ youth annually to become future leaders in rural communities. The presentation targets educators across disciplines, youth leaders, and researchers.

Audience will learn about (1) curriculum contents and strategies focusing on creating a multi-tier training/education program to strengthen youth development and to improve knowledge and awareness of food systems, and (2) assessment and evaluation tools to prove effectiveness in learning. Audience will also have opportunities to engage in activities to design, plan, modify and create their own program contents in this workshop.

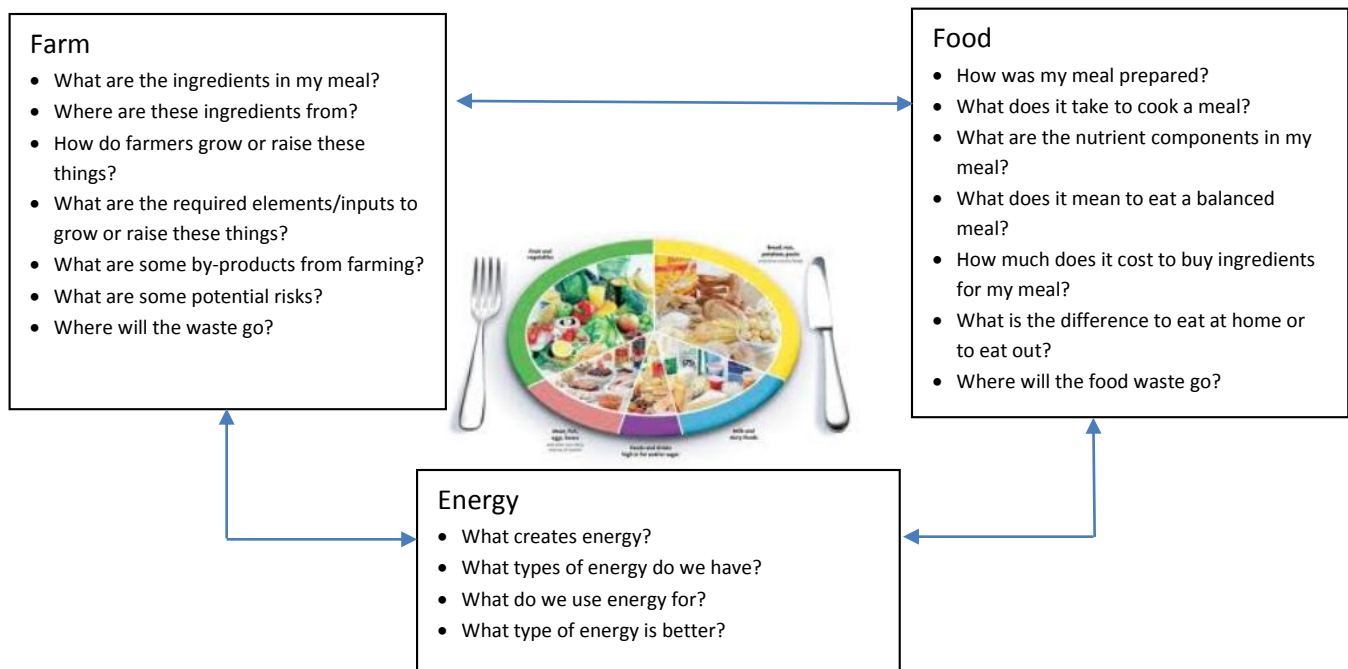
Vermont is one of the most rural states in the U.S., and we are losing young people between age 18 and 25. It is essential to assist youth living in rural areas to access education and training that will support them to identify or create opportunities. Collaborators from College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and UVM Extension established a core of leadership to develop multi-tier curricula for innovative programs including training modules, entrepreneurship education, experiential learning, and service learning through a strong collaborative environment with more than 500 community organizations and partners. TRY program and Dollar Enterprise program help us connect some of the most effective and unique individual programs together, and bridge the gaps in our existing education/training curricula.

A Summary of TRY for Food Program

The original TRY model was developed by 4-H at Utah State University to empower teens to make a difference in the lives of others (especially younger youth) through teaching opportunities, to contribute to community through volunteerism and service, to work in a team environment to develop leadership skills, and to assist younger youth to develop life skills and knowledge of new subjects. Teens must sign up as a team of 2-4 individuals and include an adult mentor. We recruit and accept 12 teams each year, and all teams with mentors will go through a 2-day training together. The training will cover a core TRY training (e.g. how to develop relationships to work as a team and other collaborators, and how to teach younger youth) and a curriculum training (e.g. how to teach lesson contents and specific subjects). Each team must sign a contract to make a commitment to teach the entire program of six one-hour lessons to two different groups of at least 15 youth for a total of 30 youth each year. Each team member and mentor must attend the training and complete the entire program. A TRY team will be

responsible to: (1) Recruit groups of youth to teach that are in grade K-3. Each team must recruit at least 15 youth to teach each time. (2) Teach each group the entire program. (3) Complete the TRY report, student attendance roster, and student evaluation forms and turn them into project coordinators at the end of delivering 6 lessons. (4) Teach the same curriculum twice within one year – use reflection and assessment from the first session to modify, improve, and enhance the teaching/communication skills when teaching in the second session.

The specific contents of the integrated curriculum for teens to teach younger children about farm, food, and energy are determined and created by research leaders at University of Vermont. Here is an example to consider a meal prepared by family members:



A Summary of Dollar Enterprise Program

Established in 2005, Dollar Enterprise offers entrepreneurial education and training opportunities for aspiring and nascent entrepreneurs across cultural, ethnicity, and learning ability to develop three aspects of entrepreneurship that are often omitted in traditional business education and textbooks:

- ✚ **Entrepreneurial individuals** through developing mindset, traits, professionalism, ethic, leadership, and creativity using hands-on activities and participatory approach.
- ✚ **Entrepreneurial knowledge and skills** through developing communication, team building, business practices, and decision making using group projects and working with community partners focusing on problem solving.
- ✚ **Entrepreneurial opportunities** through developing resources, capacity, and networks by working with local businesses, government agencies, trade associations, and service providers.

Here is a brief overview of the history of Dollar Enterprise in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont:

1998	CDAE faculty began to design and plan for the new entrepreneurship curriculum.
1998–2002	CDAE faculty designed and planned the Community Entrepreneurship major and minor.
2002	Community Entrepreneurship major and minor were born. The first class of Introduction to Community Entrepreneurship was offered.
2002–2005	CDAE faculty modified and introduced new pedagogy to teach in Community Entrepreneurship curriculum.
2005	Dollar Enterprise was included in the course, Introduction to Community Entrepreneurship, for the first time in Fall of 2005 for 80 undergraduate students enrolled in more than 20 majors at UVM.

The idea of Dollar Enterprise was created in 2005, the night before the first day of class in Fall semester of 2005 by instructor, Dr. Kathleen Liang. All Dollar Enterprise activities were designed, created, managed, and monitored by the instructor, who also supplied the seed money of \$1 to each individual. A team consists of 8–11 individuals and will have \$8–\$11 per team as seed money. Dollar Enterprise simulates a formation of any business in the real world from building teamwork, generating resources, creating coalitions, and building community partners, to dealing with day-to-day operations, assessment, optimization, and time management.

This activity runs twice a year in each semester with 120 to 140 students in each semester who form 11 to 15 teams. The instructor needs to reserve locations around campus one semester prior to Dollar Enterprise activities. These locations are outside library, outside student center, and inside student center (for non-food products only). Once the semester begins, it takes one month to prepare and apply for food permits and business details. Each team runs their business for 4 weeks (at least 3 hours every day from Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) during the semester in various pre-reserved locations on campus only. At the end of the Dollar Enterprise activities, all proceeds are donated to charity organizations and Entrepreneurship Education Fund established by Dr. Liang at University of Vermont.

Each team goes through the same process that any entrepreneur would in creating a new venture—brainstorm ideas, team building, organize business structure, assign workload to employees, gather resources (money and materials), plan business procedures, design and create products or services, conduct market research, define target market and advertising strategies, conduct financial analysis, and assess daily operations.

Weekly team reports and team member's assessments are completed and returned to the instructor at the end of each week during the operation period. At the end of the 4-week business activity, each team concludes with a business report, financial report, self-assessment, and final team member assessment. Each team donates all proceeds to local charities and a Community Entrepreneurship Education fund that has been established to assist future students who are interested in becoming successful Community Entrepreneurs.

Since 2005, Dollar Enterprise has worked with many Vermont organizations such as Sodexo Campus Dining Services at UVM, Shelburne Orchard, Champlain Orchard, Cheese Trader, City Market of Burlington, Healthy Living Food Market, Miguel's Stowe Away restaurant, Hannaford Supermarkets, and Klinger Bread. These community partners generously donated or offered discounts to students who needed materials for their products. To date, Dollar Enterprise has generated more than \$5,000 for the Entrepreneurship Education fund. Total donations to charities exceeded \$60,000, and had been delivered to charity organizations such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Humane Society, American Red Cross, Food Shelf, Local School Mentoring programs, Local Motion, Youth and Family Centers, Women Crisis Centers, and Northeast Organic Farming Association.

Bio for Dr. Kathleen Liang

Dr. Liang is the founder of the award winning Community Entrepreneurship program at the University of Vermont, which is the first entrepreneurship degree program in Colleges of Agricultural and Life Sciences in the United States. Dr. Liang received her MS and PhD from Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. Since 1998, Dr. Liang has received more than 50 national and international awards in developing innovative curricula and programs targeting on positive youth development, leadership, and entrepreneurship education. She has received more than \$7 million grants from USDA and other institutions to conduct integrated study in Food Systems, Food Networks, and Food Security; and has published more than 300 peer reviewed articles. She was recently named the National Entrepreneur Educator of the Year in 2015 by Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and received the MarketMaker 2015 Innovation Award.