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Taking Entrepreneurship into the Classroom

The benefits of introducing entrepreneurialism into the classroom are increasingly acknowledged globally. Building entrepreneurial traits and skills in youth can contribute to personal growth, greater resilience, increased preparedness for the jobs of the future and has been shown to increase school engagement. However many teachers report a lack of time, knowledge, confidence and contemporary, engaging resources as challenges faced in introducing entrepreneurialism to their class. This short interactive workshop discusses the What, Why and How of entrepreneurialism for a shared understanding. Participants gain hands on experience of some simple innovation tools designed to increase students creativity. These tools assist in building resilience and in breaking down students pre-conceived notions and attitudes of not being creative and demonstrate that we are all capable of creativity. These thinking tools are designed to be easily replicated in classrooms, regardless of curriculum area. Often creativity and critical thinking are not delineated in their application, both in education and business. This hampers the generation of new ideas which are reliant on divergent, imaginative thinking and possibilities without restraint. The result is often missed opportunities, lack of new innovations and fun in work and learning. Many people don't believe themselves to be creative, so introducing simple regular creativity tasks and energisers promotes the fact that creativity is a process and a skill that can be nurtured and learned. Embedding these skills from a young age develops confidence, stronger innovation potential and greater resilience; there are no wrong answers when you are being creative! Critical thinking is the next essential step in any design thinking or problem-solving process. Encouraging students to develop these convergent, interpretive and analytical skills as a separate / distinct activity will help them form arguments, validate assumptions and reach a conclusion. Whilst both are essential skills in problem solving, we have found that introducing simple creativity tasks at regular intervals acts as both a confidence builder and energiser for students. We advocate that introducing and nurturing entrepreneurialism (both thinking and traits) across a range of curriculum areas can be achieved by teachers with minimum experience and time. Whilst this is often done successfully during a Problem Based Learning or Design Thinking approach, short simple additions to explore and enhance creative thinking can increase teachers' toolkit, engagement and confidence to embrace and teach entrepreneurialism.