



FAST FACTS

Project : Business Planning

Teacher: Lynne Chrismer,
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School: Holt High School

Location : Wentzville, Missouri

Website:
www.wentzville.k12.mo.us

Start/End date:
September 2013-March 2014

Mentors provided by: Citigroup,
Google, Hewlett-Packard, Inc.,
Kyle David Group, MasterCard,
Merck & Co. Inc., Thomson Reuters

Unique requests of participating mentors: This project welcomes mentors who have educational and/or practical experience in business. Mentors guide students in developing business plans, and professional writing and presentation skills.

Contact: David Neils,
ITP Founder/Director
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Changing students into change agents one business plan at a time



Well-deserved award
Student proudly displays her 1st-place trophy

“An entrepreneur is an agent of change,” states Russell S. Sobel, an economics professor and James Clark Coffman Distinguished Chair in Entrepreneurial Studies at West Virginia University. Holt High School Marketing Teacher Lynne Chrismer believes this and has aspirations for students in her entrepreneurship class to become savvy change agents.

To help them, she uses materials from the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship to inspire her students (many of which come from families with a low income) “...to stay in school, recognize business opportunities and plan for successful futures.” One of the class’ projects requires students to write an operational plan for a business they would be interested in starting. Students work individually or in groups, and plans range from simple ones like making and selling baby blankets at the local flea market to more complex plans like developing an online company which provides a specific service. Local industry professionals judge their written plans and oral presentations, and select the top two students from the class to compete at the annual DECA Business Plan Competition in February, March and April. Winners receive venture capital and scholarship money.

Being savvy herself, Chrismer engages top business professionals to work side by side with her students through the International Telementor Program (ITP). But she’s picky. She requests mentors with experience either owning a business or assisting business owners in areas such as insurance, finance, law and marketing.

“I think ITP provides the perfect opportunity to have students make connections with role models in the business community,” Chrismer explains. “I can teach from the textbook, but nothing compares to the real world experiences that telementors can provide. And the amount of time and advice that each telementor can give an individual student is so much greater than what I am able to do for every student.”



"This is the best program I have adopted over the last 25 years of teaching... Many graduated students have returned to say they have learned more through the experience of my class and ITP than they did through business classes in college. I am extremely grateful for having the opportunity to work with such a strong program designed to improve student learning."

Lynne Chrismer, Holt High School Teacher

While Chrismer expects much from her students' mentors, she expects equally as much or more from her students. They must identify different components of a business plan, and write a feasible plan that includes an executive summary, business analysis, market analysis, market strategy, organizational analysis, financial development and financial analysis.

She says, "In most cases actual student outcomes meet my expectations. When they don't, rarely is it because the telemmentor didn't become engaged; rather the student did not 'buy' into the program. The telementors who have the best results are the ones who become highly interested in all aspects of their students' lives, not just the project."

"It's interesting how students become embarrassed by making spelling and grammatical mistakes when corresponding with their mentors..."

Another component of ITP that really delivers high quality student outcomes is regular, consistent communications between students and their mentors. It makes Chrismer's day when she walks into her classroom before class even begins to find students already working on their projects and checking messages from mentors. Proactive mentor communications hold students accountable and "provide more motivation for students than just having their teacher give instructions and feedback. I've also witnessed students discussing concepts I haven't taught yet because their mentors bring them up. When this occurs, it's a great segue into my lectures. The depth of knowledge increases greatly by having mentors work with students."

Some additional benefits Chrismer observes when students work with mentors include marked improve-

ments in students' writing skills. They learn how to write for reading rather than writing like they speak. Their grammar also improves and vocabulary increases. She says, "It's interesting how students become embarrassed by making spelling and grammatical mistakes when corresponding with their mentors, but they often do not pay attention to such errors when submitting assignments to their teachers."

Furthermore, Chrismer recognizes that the professional networks students have the opportunity to build by working with mentors is invaluable. "ITP provides high school students a great opportunity to make 'real world' connections. Students are craving information about how and what to do with the rest of their lives, and mentors do an outstanding job providing them with feedback and advice."

Chrismer's enthusiasm and championship of ITP also is invaluable and the best kind of marketing a business can hope for: "This is the best program I have adopted over the last 25 years of teaching. The students who continue to send their entrepreneurship business plans to DECA competitions all agree that they would never had made it through competition without access to ITP and great mentors. Many graduated students have returned to say they have learned more through the experience of my class and ITP than they did through business classes in college. I am extremely grateful for having the opportunity to work with such a strong program designed to improve student learning." 🌍

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- Complete a business plan
- Give a presentation about their business plan to the class and local professionals using appropriate supports, such as props and PowerPoint
- Keep a portfolio of correspondence from their telemmentor

WWW.TELEMMENTOR.ORG

The International Telemmentor Program ■ David Neils, Founder/Director

