

The Role of Experiential Learning in Developing Entrepreneurial Skills among Adolescents

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Abstract

The cultivation of a global growth mindset is paramount for empowering future generations, fostering adaptability, and driving innovation to surmount the multifaceted challenges facing our interconnected world. This mindset, characterized by the belief in the potential for continuous growth through dedication and effort, is a vital ingredient for navigating an era defined by rapid technological advancements, economic shifts, and evolving social landscapes. A global growth mindset transcends geographical boundaries, equipping students with the cognitive and emotional tools necessary to thrive in a dynamic and unpredictable environment.

Recognizing the significance of this paradigm shift, educational initiatives are increasingly embracing experiential learning methodologies. The Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) implemented in Delhi schools stands as a compelling illustration of this approach, moving beyond traditional, rote-based instruction to cultivate a dynamic and engaging learning ecosystem. By prioritizing experience, inspiration, and reflection, the EMC aims to instill in students an entrepreneurial spirit, characterized by a willingness to embrace challenges, take calculated risks, and persevere through inevitable setbacks. The EMC's framework is meticulously designed, incorporating six key components that synergistically work towards the overarching goal of fostering a growth mindset. Mindfulness practices enhance focus and attention, cultivating a state of presence that facilitates deeper learning. Thematic units provide structured frameworks for exploring entrepreneurial concepts, while student specials foster communication skills and collaborative spirit. Live entrepreneur interactions expose students to real-world experiences, providing invaluable insights into the triumphs and tribulations of the entrepreneurial journey. Career exploration broadens students' horizons, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future pathways. Central to the EMC's efficacy is the "Business Blasters" project, a hands-on initiative that empowers students to transform theoretical knowledge into tangible outcomes. Through this project, students apply classroom learning to develop viable business ventures or address pressing social issues, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deep understanding of the entrepreneurial process. By engaging in real-world challenges, students develop resilience, adaptability, and the ability to learn from both successes and failures. The EMC's transformative potential extends far beyond the classroom, shaping not only individual student trajectories but also contributing to the development of a more innovative and entrepreneurial society. By equipping students with the skills and mindset necessary to navigate the complexities of the 21st century, the EMC serves as a catalyst for positive change, fostering a generation of adaptable, resourceful, and socially conscious global citizens. The success of the EMC serves as a testament to the power of experiential learning in nurturing a global growth mindset, empowering students to become lifelong learners, innovative thinkers, and catalysts for positive change in a rapidly evolving world.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Mindset, Curriculum, students, Innovation, Problem Solving,

Introduction

At the global level, fostering entrepreneurship among students is no longer optional but a necessity. The world faces unprecedented challenges demanding innovative solutions, and students, unburdened by conventional thinking, possess the creativity to address them. Entrepreneurship empowers them to create jobs, drive economic growth, and develop disruptive technologies. It nurtures crucial skills like problem-solving, leadership, and resilience, essential for navigating the evolving job market. By encouraging students to embrace risk-taking and innovation, it is our responsibility to equip them to become future leaders capable of building a more sustainable and prosperous world. For nation building, it is needed to have nurtured and developed leaders who have dreamt big, have taken risks, have set visions for inspiring innovations, and have demanded excellence in execution. The world around us has had no dearth of unsolved problems and untapped opportunities. Why have we not seen a large number of graduating students identifying opportunities, brainstorming, and trying out solutions? Instead, we have seen Masters and doctorate graduates lined up for applying to a peon's job. It is needed to have prepared students' mindsets during school education so that they can take charge of their careers and become productive citizens of the country. Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum was launched with the vision of "Nurturing their own abilities and qualities, empower students to take charge of their career-paths in employment or entrepreneurship. Whatever the students choose to do, they must do it with the Entrepreneurship Mindset". The framework for EMC was released in February 2019. The curriculum was piloted in 300 classrooms across 24 schools in April-May 2019 and thereafter launched for around 7.5 lakh students of classes 9-12 in 1,000+ schools in July 2019.

An independent process evaluation study was performed in parallel and its recommendation in corporate in to the second version. The second version was extensively reviewed by over 80 teachers, and it was launched in July 2020.

What is Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum?

Through the **Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum** we want our students to think like an entrepreneur Irrespective of what they pursue,-- willing to dream big, try new and challenging goals, be able to recognize opportunities around, and then plan and execute to bring them to fruition. Failures are a part of life, but our students should be able to bounce back from them, analyze and learn from both successes and failures, and relentlessly persevere to achieve their goals. These

entrepreneurial abilities are linked with several foundational abilities and key qualities listed below.

Entrepreneurship Mindset helps in going beyond the limitations in any field and ensures success by making the person an effective problem solver.



How is the Entrepreneurship Mindset Inculcated in EMC?

Learning via Experience, Inspiration and Reflection: The pedagogy for developing the Entrepreneurship Mindset in students is primarily experiential, with some degree of inspiration and a lot of reflection.

Experience-- Students learn by doing activities either by themselves or with class mates in small groups, and increase their understanding by asking questions and exploring options. Activities include both classroom activities and outside the classroom activities.

Inspiration—Students get a chance to

Interact with real-life successful entrepreneurs and professionals, and listen to their stories highlighting specific mindset themes.

Reflection-- Individually and collectively in small groups, students share their observations and explore questions about their experiences in doing activities or about the entrepreneurship Mindset observed in the journeys of successful Entrepreneurs and professionals. These reflections help in deepening their learning to be applied to future experiences.



This pedagogy is woven in to six components, two are conducted inside the class room and two are done in the outside world

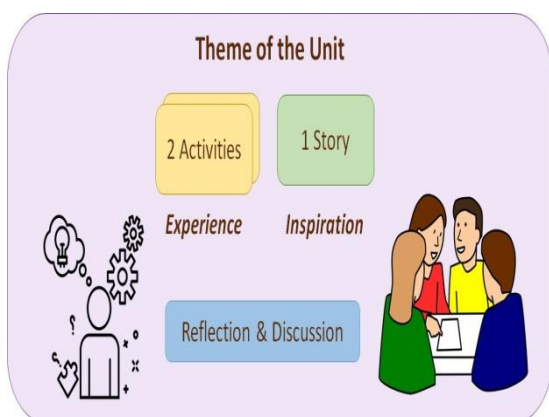
Component	Objective	When to do	Role of the Teacher	Role of the Students
Mindfulness	To be aware of the present, to calm the mind and to focus	Mindful check-in (3-5min) at the start and silent check-out (1-2min) at the end of daily EMC period In the EMC period on the first Monday of every month	To conduct mindful check-in and silent check-out. To conduct the monthly mind fullness activity on the first Monday of every month	Participating in the mindfulness activities
Thematic Units	To develop Entrepreneurship Mindset in students through activities, stories and reflection	In the daily EMC period	To facilitate the activities and stories as given in the manual	Doing the activities, listening to stories, reflecting, discussing and sharing.
Student Specials	To improve communication and develop confidence with regular practice and feedback	EMC period every Saturday, or any free period	To explain the process, get it started and support of needed	Performing different roles while conducting the activities
Live Entrepreneur Interactions	Understanding the journeys of entrepreneurs and employment alternatives by meeting them face- to-face	According to instructions by school administration and availability of the entrepreneur	Introducing the Entrepreneur and Managing the interaction	Listening to the entrepreneur and asking questions without hesitation
Career Exploration	Interviewing entrepreneurs and people doing jobs,	One interview Every month On every month's last	Helping the students create a list of careers they are interested in, and	Finding people whose careers they are interested in; interviewing them

	understanding their professional journeys	Monday and Tuesday, students will share their experience of the interviews	preparing them for interviews	and sharing the experience with the class
Business Blasters	Use Entrepreneurship Mindset in real life	Instructions regarding the Field Project execution will be given through circulars	Guiding the students through the process as instructed in the circulars	Using the given amount for an effective economic or social project by applying Entrepreneurship Mindset

Components of Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum

Thematic Units

Blending various entrepreneurial abilities with foundational abilities and key qualities, 30+ Unitson17+themes have been designed across grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, with due consideration given to reducing work load for students in grades10 and 12 preparing for Board examinations. Themes have been designed to meet objectives as defined in the EMC Framework. Themes with broader and complex objectives are spiraled across multiple grades to meet the objectives. Each Thematic Unit has a set of learning outcomes which are achieved by the Activities and Story (where present) along with associated Reflection and Discussion.



Seed Money Project-Business Blasters

The primary objective of “Business Blasters” is to provide an immersive real-world opportunity to practice and apply the entrepreneurial abilities learned in the classroom. Using the seed money of Rs.2000 per student provided by the

government, in small teams, students identify and pursue real world opportunities either for making profit or for creating social impact. Research and experience of various universities around the world have confirmed that immersive real-world projects like this accelerate developing entrepreneurial abilities.

Career Exploration

In Career Exploration, students understand a wide variety of career paths by interviewing both entrepreneurs and professionals about their experiences and journeys. This way, they get a direct exposure to a variety of career options in employment and in business, and they also learn to interact with working people.

Career exploration is the link between students’ understanding of skill sand qualities, and their importance in different careers. It is an opportunity for the students to know the professional life of people engaged in careers aligned with interests, capabilities, curiosities and aspirations of students. Equipped with the knowledge of various career opportunities the students feel more confident and capable to choose their careers after completing their education.

Mindfulness

Every EMC class begins with a five minute “Mindfulness” to help students get centered and be attentive in class. Attention is a prerequisite for any kind of learning. Mindfulness also helps students increase their focus and concentration on the task at hand.

Dos	Don'ts
Active participation and awareness	Pronunciation of specific words or mantra
Love, harmony, humility, calm atmosphere	Stressful expressions that cause stress, such as scolding, harsh words,
Relax and participate	Interrupt students in any way

Mindfulness Program:

Everyday Mindfulness	Monthly Mindfulness- First Monday of the Month
Start: Mindful check-in (3-5minutes)	Start: Mindful check-in (3-5minutes)
Regular EMC class Each day's EMC class will only have the Mindful check-in and Silent check-out processes.	Detailed session of mindfulness (any one of the following) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to Mindfulness ● Mindful Listening ● Mindful Silence ● Mindful Breathing
End: Silent check-out(1-2 minutes)	End: Silent check-out(1-2 minutes)

Student Specials

Several abilities in the Entrepreneurship Mindset such as Effective Communication require extensive practice with constructive feedback. Student Specials have been designed keeping this requirement in mind. These sessions are conducted by students themselves during Saturday EMC periods or during free periods. Students in different grades choose one of the activities such as Just A Minute (JAM), Jaldi Debate, Candidate Interview, and Group Discussion. Students get assigned to roles in the 'executing team' or be 'participants' and 'observers'. Overall, students are encouraged to maintain a warm, non-judgmental environment for practicing various communication scenarios. Observers give constructive feedback to speakers on the effectiveness of their communication, including eye contact, body

language, voice modulation as well as activity-specific communication objectives. Emphasis is also put on time-bound communication, and a timer keeps track of whether speakers adhere to their allotted time limits. Since these sessions are organized by students, they also get to practice organization skills.

Live Entrepreneur Interactions (LEI)

The Live Entrepreneur Interaction of the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) of the Delhi government is meant to motivate students by exposing them to actual entrepreneurs. Through these sessions, entrepreneurs explain their experiences, problems, and achievements, which enable students to gain a hands-on knowledge of entrepreneurship. The program instills critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation skills in students. It also offers exposure to various career opportunities and entrepreneurial avenues. These interactions fill the gap between book learning and practical business experience, building confidence and enthusiasm in young minds.

The objectives of LEI is to give students:

- An exposure to wide variety of entrepreneurial opportunities, and
- An understanding of the challenges and successes involved in entrepreneurial journeys.

Conclusion

The Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) implemented in Delhi schools stands as a compelling model for cultivating entrepreneurial skills and mindsets among adolescents. This innovative program underscores the critical shift in education toward experiential learning, recognizing that traditional rote learning often falls short in equipping students with the adaptability, problem-solving skills, and initiative required thriving in the rapidly evolving 21st-century landscape. By moving beyond conventional classroom instruction, the EMC fosters a dynamic learning environment that encourages students to embrace risk-taking, creativity, and resilience – key attributes of successful

entrepreneurs and effective leaders. The strength of the EMC lies in its multi-faceted approach, integrating diverse components that cater to various learning styles and needs. Thematic units provide structured learning experiences, while the "Business Blasters" seed money project offers an immersive opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, either by creating profit-generating ventures or by addressing social issues. This hands-on experience is invaluable in fostering critical thinking, resourcefulness, and the ability to navigate the complexities of the business world. Furthermore, the incorporation of mindfulness practices promotes focus, attention, and emotional regulation, essential qualities for managing stress and maintaining well-being in demanding environments. Career exploration initiatives expose students to a wide range of career paths, both in entrepreneurship and traditional employment, allowing them to make informed decisions about their future based on their interests, skills, and aspirations. This component is particularly crucial in bridging the gap between academic learning and the practical realities of the job market. The "Student Specials" sessions, organized and led by students themselves, cultivate communication skills, teamwork, and

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leadership abilities, further enhancing their preparedness for future endeavors. Crucially, the EMC incorporates live entrepreneur interactions, providing students with firsthand exposure to the journeys, challenges, and successes of real-world entrepreneurs. These interactions serve as powerful sources of inspiration, demonstrating that entrepreneurial success is attainable with hard work, perseverance, and a willingness to learn from both triumphs and setbacks. By connecting students with role models and mentors, the EMC fosters a sense of possibility and empowers them to pursue their own entrepreneurial dreams.

In essence, the EMC represents a holistic and transformative approach to education, moving beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge to the cultivation of essential skills and mindsets. By fostering creativity, problem-solving abilities, resilience, and a spirit of innovation, the EMC equips students with the tools they need to become future leaders, job creators, and agents of positive change in their communities and beyond. The program serves as a testament to the power of experiential learning in shaping the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators.