

A Sun West Success Story

In Spring 2022, eight schools across the Sun West School Division in Saskatchewan participated in an experiential learning demonstration project. As a result, 168 students experienced the excitement and reward of developing their own real-world business ventures through PowerPlay Young Entrepreneurs. The young entrepreneurs designed their own products and packaging, wrote professional business plans, calculated financials, and developed marketing materials. At the end of the program, each of the schools hosted Young Entrepreneur Show where students showcased their achievements, made sales and earned real money. They also donated a portion of their profits to a charity of their choice, instilling a sense of social responsibility.

The PowerPlay program aligns with the division's priorities of engagement, well-being, and academic achievement through their the Personalized electronically Blended Learning philosophy and the development of 21st Century Skills.

21st Century Skills

This project empowered the students to take initiative and risks as well as, be creative and curious, think critically, collaborate, build character and practice cultural and ethical citizenship - all characteristics of 21st century skills that support the division in their mission of "learning together" and vision of "success for all." These skills have been identified as being the most essential for learning and life, now and in the future.

"PowerPlay makes you think and helps you with money skills and future life skills and it helps you with planning skills," reflected Taylor a Grade 8 student who made 22-inch plant pots. She explained the number of skills required to create her project included "speaking with parents and other students to determine the right size, a lot of math and thinking skills because you need to think about what you are going to make, what people would want and then you need to think of price and how much you are going to charge." Not only did the program "boost my confidence and socialization a lot, I also discovered that I like plants more than I thought."



"I ENJOYED THE TEAMWORK THAT IT BUILT WITH STUDENTS BOUNCING IDEAS OFF ONE ANOTHER ENCOURAGING EVERYONE TO BE SUCCESSFUL."

- STEVE ADNAM, TEACHER

"IT WAS GOOD FOR 21ST CENTURY SKILLS, AND ALL OF THE CHILDREN COMPLETED THE PROJECT AND FELT A SENSE OF PRIDE IN THE OUTCOME."

- FERN BLOCK, TEACHER

Student Engagement

"I find it [PowerPlay program] fun because first off, you can make money so that's always a plus, but also because I am really into woodworking, so it was less work for me and more enjoyment," noted Alex who made wooden robots. While Alex reports the program as being fun and enjoyable, he also shared that "at first, I was struggling with an idea – my dad started to help me – we went online and found a picture of a similar idea and I took inspiration from that."

Teachers noticed increased engagement within the classroom, as well as a high degree of meaningful family involvement. As one teacher shared, "I also really enjoyed the family engagement piece with parents. Lots of moms and dads texted me... it was so great... we got to hang out." Based on both student and teacher feedback, the program is regularly refined and, resulting in a high level of student engagement, even among those who have not responded well to traditional teaching methods due to the integration of fun activities, with the freedom for students to experiment and set their own goals.

"I DISCOVERED THAT I CAN ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING AMAZING. EVEN THOUGH IT WAS HARD, I KEPT GOING AND I NEVER GAVE UP. I LEARNED THAT IF I PUT MY MIND TO IT I CAN DO AWESOME AND CREATIVE THINGS."

Well-Being

Jaxen, who made goofy glasses holders learned "that I am good at making this." He shared that "normally you have to read a book to do something right." He loved the program as it taught beyond traditional quantitative measurements of success to the core abilities that help students live healthy, productive lives. "Instead of reading a book, we get to build stuff and sell it and do a fun project." With PowerPlay, there



is no one "right way", the program is inclusive and allows students with diverse abilities to achieve success because as one teacher noted, "the program allowed, voice, choice, and for students to lead their own learning – that made it inclusive to all learners." She went on to say that "One of my students has an attitude of hopelessness. On the day of the Entrepreneur Sale, he came to life and was thrilled. To see his face was extremely rewarding. The program helped him psychologically and academically."

"I REALLY ENJOYED THE FEELING OF SELLING SOMETHING I MADE AND PEOPLE BUYING IT AND LIKING IT. IT JUST MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU DID A GOOD JOB AND YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL."



Student Achievement

Teachers who transform lives understand not only how to teach curriculum, but also how children develop into capable, caring, and engaged adults. One teacher marvelled as she watched one of her students who struggles with math and self-esteem selling her product with so much confidence at the year-end showcase, saying she felt “like the Grinch, my teacher’s heart grew three sizes.”

Teachers were provided with a full entrepreneurial curriculum that included a resource package that they expressed aligned with the Personalized electronically Blended Learning philosophy that has students learning in ways that complement their strengths, challenge them, enhance creativity, problem solving and self-awareness. Rihanna’s teacher encouraged her to “use the skills from my shop class” to make wind chimes. She marvelled that “I made something I didn’t know how to make” at the beginning of the program. She went on to say that she would recommend PowerPlay to her friends because “it is a good chance to learn something different.”

“I DISCOVERED THAT I CAN DO ANYTHING I PUT MY MIND TO.”

“I GOT TO MAKE A PRODUCT AND MAKE MISTAKES AND LEARN.”

“IT IS A REALLY HELPFUL AND GOOD PROGRAM THAT REALLY PUSHES YOU TO BE A BETTER AND MORE CREATIVE VERSION OF YOURSELF.”

Conclusion

Cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age can be fostered in young people by teaching 21st century skills that include engaging them in authentic exploratory learning, where they are empowered to take risks, be creative and not be afraid to fail. One teacher commented that, “the program allowed students to build on interpersonal skills, problem solve in groups, and learn from their mistakes.” Building on that, another teacher added that “I loved the collaboration and creativity that it allowed my students to have.” Through the PowerPlay program, teachers create a community where students feel safe and secure to confidently develop their own learning journeys.



Student Engagement:

TEACHER IMPRESSIONS:

100% of Sun West teachers agreed that the PowerPlay program was:

- effective in developing skills in their students.
- easy to implement in their classrooms and that their students were highly engaged and willing to learn.

STUDENT FEEDBACK:

Sun West students showed a 34% increase in communicating with people they do and don't know as a result of participating in the PowerPlay program.

Well-being:

TEACHER IMPRESSIONS:

100% of Sun West teachers agreed that the PowerPlay program:

- was inclusive, and allowed students with diverse abilities to achieve success.
- helped students build confidence.

STUDENT FEEDBACK:

Sun West students:

- reported a 16% increase in overcoming the fear of rejection.
- showed a 24% increase in being curious and willing to explore new things after completing the PowerPlay program.

Student Achievement:

TEACHER IMPRESSIONS:

100% of Sun West teachers agreed that the PowerPlay program was:

- easy to implement in their classroom.
- inclusive, and allowed students with diverse abilities to achieve success.

STUDENT FEEDBACK:

Sun West students reported a 19% increase in their ability to imagine a solution for a hard problem.

Resource Package Features

PowerPlay Young Entrepreneurs® helps grades 4 to 8 students start their own real businesses. They design business plans, products and marketing materials. They also earn real money and donate a portion of their profits to charity. Program features include:

- A detailed teacher manual with lesson plans, activity sheets and planning tools.
- Inspirational videos featuring tips and ideas from other young entrepreneurs.
- Business Planning Kits (student workbooks) for the young entrepreneurs to track their progress.
- Parent Information Packages to assist parents with supporting their children's project at home.
- Professional development for teachers that highlights differentiating instruction, integrating into curriculum and assessing learning.

Our Research

Simon Fraser University (SFU) completed independent research on PowerPlay Young Entrepreneurs by surveying over 2400 students (and their teachers) in British Columbia. The results have shown student participants demonstrate increases of:

- 26-59% in global competencies (e.g., creativity, critical thinking, communications).
- 11% in growth mindset.

The program has also proven to be very inclusive. It successfully helps students with diverse learning differences find their own pathways to success. In addition, there is a 95% adoption rate of teachers.

PowerPlay Contact Information:

Bill Roche, Program Creator

Phone: **604.538.0816** toll free: **1.888.880.0816**

bill@powerplay4success.com

www.powerplay4success.com