Educator Survey Results
Indicate Program Supports Educators and Facilitates
TRANSFORMATION in Students

2018-2019 Educator End of Year Survey Results
Executive Summary

As states grant governance regarding curriculum to school districts and educators, the demand for educator-endorsed programs and proper curriculum support has increased. Findings from a study conducted by Youth Entrepreneurs (YE) of its educators from the 2018-2019 school year indicate strong peer endorsement and satisfactory educator support and empowerment, in addition to observable student transformations regarding increased self-fulfillment and self-confidence. Given these encouraging survey results, it is clear educator-endorsed programs such as Youth Entrepreneurs can be valuable conduits to facilitate student transformation.

Introduction

As constituents across the country continue to propose different means by which to transform the education system in the United States, experiential-learning curricula and supplemental programs are proving to be effective sources of inspiration for educators that also cultivate visible transformations in young people. Such is the case with the Youth Entrepreneurs program. Youth Entrepreneurs is an experiential-education nonprofit offering its free curriculum and resources to educators looking for a well-rounded program emphasizing soft skills, free-market principles, and character development. Findings from a recent study indicate the program’s educators from the 2018-2019 school year found Youth Entrepreneurs to be valuable for their own personal and professional development while also facilitating visible transformation in the lives of their students.

Since the development of standardized education in the United States, states via curriculum-review panels have examined curriculum options and approved those suitable for implementation. However, in recent years, increasingly more states have assigned governance regarding curriculum choice over to school districts and their unique educator networks, including the state of California (Loewus & Molnar, 2017). With this newfound freedom comes an increased responsibility on superintendents and educators to sift through options of varying quality and make recommendations based on their findings.

In response to this market demand, state education agencies and education organizations have begun creating open-license resources in order to provide educators with tools that are more holistic in nature instead of an individual lesson, game, or activity (Cavanagh, 2017). Given these shifts in curriculum freedom and open-license resources, the question becomes whether programs such as these facilitate long-term learning and transformation in students. In order to combat this added responsibility, many educators and/or school districts turn to programs holding endorsements from their fellow peers, respected education thought leaders, and education content outlets (Gizowski, 2019).

To determine the level of educator endorsement, the Youth Entrepreneurs research capability conduct-
ed a study to investigate program efficacy regarding educator value/support and student impact in the form of observable transformation. Findings from this study indicate educators discovered the Youth Entrepreneurs program able to provide proper support while also positively impacting students enrolled in the course, as detailed in the results below. Given these encouraging survey results, it is clear educator-endorsed programs such as Youth Entrepreneurs can be valuable conduits to facilitate student transformation in their classrooms when educators are granted the freedom to choose curriculum and/or supplemental materials that best satisfy their unique needs.

Methods and Limitations

The purpose of this study was to determine the value of the Youth Entrepreneurs program from the educator’s perspective while also identifying the level of observed transformation in their students at the conclusion of the 2018-2019 school year. Data was collected for this study via survey distributed at the end of the school year; general surveys were sent out via email to each Youth Entrepreneurs educator. A total of 145 educators participated in the survey out of 240 Youth Entrepreneurs educators nationwide, a response rate of 60% with a 5% margin of error.

Results

As shown in Figure 1, Youth Entrepreneurs educators found the organization to be supportive of their teaching efforts overall and believed it offered them valuable professional development opportunities. Ninety-six percent of educators found teaching the Youth Entrepreneurs class to be valuable to them personally, while 94% of respondents cited feeling capable of teaching the curriculum, a testament to the high-quality training and support received by all educators engaged with the organization. These findings starkly contrast with a study conducted by Economic Policy Institute that reported 50% of educators feel inadequately supported in their teaching efforts (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). Given the vision of Youth Entrepreneurs is to empower educators, findings such as these indicate the implementation and realization of the organization’s vision; 89% of respondents stated they are thinking differently as a result of their involvement with Youth Entrepreneurs, and 90% reported they would recommend the program to a friend or colleague, further strengthening this assumption.
Educators also reported the tangible impact they see the Youth Entrepreneurs program having on their students, as displayed in Figure 2. Ninety-one percent of educators stated Youth Entrepreneurs is transforming their students’ lives for the better; 83% of educators noted the Youth Entrepreneurs program helped their 2018-2019 students discover what they are good at, a proof point speaking to the program’s efficacy in helping students discover, develop, and apply their innate talents and abilities.

Additionally, 88% saw their students exiting the Youth Entrepreneurs program with a greater sense of self-fulfillment and self-confidence, as shown in Figure 2. This figure is important to note due to a study that found a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in students (Booth & Gerard, 2011). Self-esteem is critical in this context, as self-esteem is defined for the purposes of this research as being “a subjective assessment that involves feelings of confidence” that “prospectively predicts success and well-being in life” (Orth & Robbins, 2014). Hence, students with higher levels of self-confidence inherently possess greater self-esteem, which positively contributes to quality of life in school and beyond. These results display the curriculum’s competitive advantage of instilling a sense of worth in the minds of its students via experiential learning and soft-skills development.

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Evidence obtained from this study indicates Youth Entrepreneurs creates value in the lives of its educators; this value creation is then transferred from educators to students in the form of observable transformations. Youth Entrepreneurs educators reported being properly supported and empowered in their pursuits to teach the program; students exited the program with a greater sense of self-fulfillment and self-confidence per educator observations. Both takeaways point to an effective execution of the organization’s vision to empower and mobilize educators to impact their students in life-changing ways. It is the organization’s hope that the 2019-2020 educator results will mirror the findings discussed in this year’s report.


