

Minding Our Business Summer
Program: An Intensive
Entrepreneurship Experience for
Urban Preadolescents

Sigfredo Hernandez

Cynthia Newman

Rider University

hernandez@rider.edu

Introduction

- MOB is a community outreach program of the College of Business Administration at Rider University
- The Program mission is to advance the personal and vocational development of urban youth through entrepreneurship education and mentoring.
- Students are junior high students at Trenton public schools, 2/3 female, ages 10-13, African American and poor.
- The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the short-term effect of MOB on preadolescent urban youth



Certificate of Participation
awarded to
SYDNEY S. BELL

Certificate of Participation
awarded to
BRIENNA M. DEVLUGT

Certificate of Participation
awarded to
NATALIA J. RICE

Program Description

- Build on NFTE Biz Camp model – 2 weeks of intensive training, NFTE curriculum, business plan competition & market fair.
- Targets younger population of low income urban youth, ages 10-13.
- Reading for understanding and tutoring help students with reading and math difficulties.
- More extensive experiential component – 4 mentor support sessions, 4 merchandise trips, and 4 market fairs.

Program Objectives

- Improved entrepreneurship
- Improved communication skills
- Improved academic performance
- Improved self-esteem
- Increased interest in attending college
- Increased interest in entrepreneurship and in starting own business

Activities that Facilitate Objectives

- Entrepreneurship skills – training, merchandise trips market fairs & reflection at mentor support sessions.
- Communication skills – writing business memos, writing business plan, oral presentation of business plan, and business plan competition.
- Academic performance – reading skills workshop, college students tutor for reading and math, intensive training.
- Self-Esteem – most students meet successfully the challenges faced in the training and experiential program components.
- Interest in attending college – use of host university facilities, tutors are college students, and college preparation workshop.
- Interest in entrepreneurship – learn and experience becoming entrepreneurs, and students more interested in running their businesses year-round are invited to the Advanced Program.

The Experiential Learning Cycle

- Exposure to entrepreneurship concepts
- Application of concepts in business plans
- Entrepreneurship action at merchandise trips and market fairs
- Reflection on action at mentor support sessions
- Adjustments to entrepreneurship action

MOB Effect on Urban Preadolescents

2005 Student Training Reaction Survey – Perceived Changes in Self as a Result of Participation in MOB (n=34)

Item	Changes in Self (percentages)		
	Better	The Same	Worse
■ Feelings about own future	82	18	0
■ Entrepreneurship skills	79	18	3
■ Ability to communicate	79	21	0
■ Feelings about self	74	26	0
■ As a student	62	38	0
■ Conflict resolution skills	56	38	6

MOB Effect on Urban Preadolescents

MOB Impact on Future Plans (in percentages)

- 65% more interested in a career in entrepreneurship because of MOB
- 77% more interested in going to college because of MOB
- 79% more interested in starting their own businesses because of MOB

Knowledge of Entrepreneurship (T-test)

Group	Mean Before	Mean After	P	df
MOB students	9.7	11.9	<.01	31
Control group	7.7	8.9	<.05	16

Self-Esteem (T-test)

Group	Mean Before	Mean After	P	df
MOB students	33.4	36.1	<.01	16
Control group	32.1	31.5	<.50	16

MOB Effect on Urban Preadolescents

Market Fairs & Mentor Support Sessions

- 75% attendance to 4 fairs and 4 sessions
 - Average sales of \$81 at first market fair
 - Average sales of \$34 at last market fair
 - 68% felt mentor support sessions were beneficial
 - 81% plan to stay in business after the end of the program
-

Reflections About Entrepreneurship Experience

- Most important thing learned about running a business: the importance of customers and of satisfying their needs.
- What entrepreneurship is all about: to own a business and to undertake risks.
- The most enjoyable part of their entrepreneurial experience: making money.
- The most difficult part of their entrepreneurial experience: understanding customer needs and satisfying them.

So What?

- Low income youth need meaningful summer learning experiences because they experience greater summer learning losses
- MOB serves as a model for the development of meaningful learning experiences in entrepreneurship for low income urban preadolescents.
- Students are taught to read more effectively and tutors help students with learning difficulties with reading and math during the training.
- Learning continues through structured reflection on the entrepreneurship experience.

Future Research

- Pre-post test with control group design to determine reading and math gains
- Focus groups and surveys of MOB alumni students (1997-2005) to be used for evaluating the long term program effects on students.
- Did students finished high school, decided to go to college, and continue to run their businesses?