

Targeted Teaching Topic



BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN NEBRASKA



A new resource to help Nebraska communities connect with their youth and build awareness about the opportunities that entrepreneurship provides for them is continuing to expand and grow. The title of this web resource pretty much tells the story...Community Connections.

Community Connections is yet another phase of UNL 4-H Extension's ongoing groundbreaking efforts to nurture the entrepreneurial spirit in Nebraska youth.

Community Connections was created based on the feedback received from statewide focus groups. Community leaders and young entrepreneurs spoke eloquently about the need for a guide to help communities encourage young people to turn their business ideas into reality.

The young entrepreneurs talked of needing encouragement and respect from adults in their communities, as well as needing community members to support them by being their customers. Each shared their experiences within and near their own communities, and most (not all) said that they had a great deal more success outside than within their own community.

Despite that, **every one** of the focus group youth said that, given the choice, they would like to stay in their home community to build their businesses. But, not everyone felt that they would be encouraged to stay.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS?

Community Connections is a web-based resource to help communities have an organized approach to engaging their youth in the community. Its purpose is to foster a belief that there are economic opportunities for them to remain in Nebraska or return after they attain a postsecondary degree or work experience to enhance their skills and knowledge. The optimal result will be the creation of a new wave of entrepreneurial ventures across the state in communities that realize the untapped potential of their youth and that truly want to tap into that intellectual and leadership capital.



Organizing the community to be supportive of entrepreneurial ventures is a key to success. Another key is to create a cadre of mentors and mavens willing to help young entrepreneurs get their business ideas off the ground. In addition, mapping the community's assets helps identify resources, financial and human, that are so incredibly important to nurture a new business in its infancy.

Resources are constantly being added to the Community Connections website. Templates for leading Community Connections meetings have been and continue to be created, so it's user-friendly and timely. If you are a community leader, teacher, instructor, or educational leader in your state, it's well worth checking out.

SPOT Analysis

Assessing Community Strengths, Problems, Opportunities, Threats Teachers Guide

Relevant National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial Skills The Processes and Traits/Behaviors associated with entrepreneurial success.	
A	Entrepreneurial Processes Understands concepts and processes associated with successful entrepreneurial performance
Discovery	
A.01	Explain the need for entrepreneurial discovery
A.02	Discuss entrepreneurial discovery processes
A.04	Determine opportunities for venture creation
A.05	Assess opportunities for venture creation
A.07	Generate venture ideas
A.08	Determine feasibility of ideas

Community Connections

Community Connections is more than just a phrase, it's actually a community planning, youth leadership development, and entrepreneurial community building web resource created by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln 4-H Extension. It is constantly evolving and is intended to be a tool that communities can use to engage their youth in community planning and entrepreneurship opportunity identification.

Community Connections Guide



Community Connections is all about finding the youth in your community who either are learning about, or would like to learn about entrepreneurship and connecting them with opportunities to start their own business in their own community. The home page for Community Connections is located at <http://liferaydemo.unl.edu/web/communityconnections/home>.

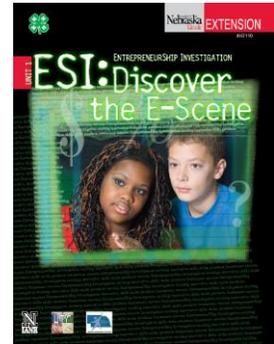
The Community Connections "Guide" is actually a set of activities and lesson plans that a community can use to bring together community leaders and young people over a period seven sessions, approximately 3 hours in length. The great part is that it can be adapted to a variety of settings, groups, and time frames. And, the activity handouts are in pdf format for easy download and printing.

Most of the seven sessions even have a video introduction in which explanations about the content, tips for usage, and more are covered. The eventual goal is to not only have a video introduction for all seven segments, but other video segments related to that session's theme featuring success stories of young entrepreneurs and communities that have used Community Connections effectively.

Community Connections and ESI

The sessions are designed to incorporate the use of the EntrepreneurShip Investigation curriculum throughout, but many of the activities and handouts can be used independently.

Communities, however, will likely see the value of purchasing ESI because it puts a carefully designed, standards-based curriculum in the hands of students, teachers, and community leaders. It was developed after careful research, input by focus groups, pilot-testing, and has been successfully used in a variety of settings including traditional classroom instruction, after-school programs, at-risk youth programs, adult training programs, home schools, and more.



And, because budgets are always tight, especially now, reaching out to community foundations and local financial institutions. Financial institutions are required by the Community Reinvestment Act to invest back in their local communities. One way for them to do this is by donations and grants to non-profit organizations such as schools, youth groups, and community organizations. Purchasing ESI for young people may be “just the ticket” for a grant or donation! You won’t know until you ask!

Bottom line, though, is that Community Connections stands on its own merits, even if a community isn’t able link it directly with ESI.

Session Templates

The template for each session breaks the activities and discussions into time segments. Yes, it’s definitely user-friendly!

The sessions, their titles, and basic content are noted below:

Session 1: Getting Connected, Who Should be on our Team

Find the mavens, champions, coaches

Session 2: Using Strengths to Build a Dream

Strengths, Interests, Hobbies, Dream Community

Session 3: Dialogue across the Generations

Changing Attitudes to Encourage Youth

Session 4: What have other communities done

Models, Templates, Case Studies

Session 5: Understanding our Community Heritage as a Foundation for our Future

Where we were, Where we are, Where we are going

Session 6: Customize it

Setting Goals and developing Action Plans

Session 7: How do we get there?

Assigning tasks/committees/Marketing

Session 5 – SPOT Analysis

The focus of Session 5 is on understanding community heritage as a foundation for the future. It uses a clever twist on the “SWOT Analysis” (assessing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and relabels it “SPOT Analysis” (Strengths, Problems, Opportunities, and Threats).

A Template for Session 5: Understanding our Community Heritage as a Foundation for our Future

This template can be used as a guide for session 5 using Community Connections activities and worksheets. This template is based on a three hour meeting. Everyone attending should have a copy of, or be aware of, the ESI (EntrepreneurShip Investigation) Curriculum. Change the times as needed for your Community Connections project...

Introduction to Session 5

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Click to play video >

6:00 pm to 6:15 pm	Report in on Action Item assigned in Session 4 – ESI Unit 3, Chapter 2 “Uncovering your Business Ideas”, exercises on Pages 2.2 and 2.3 substituting the business ideas from Session 4 for those provided in Activity 1. Part B
6:15 pm to 7:15 pm	Review the History of the Community – Speaker from the Local Historical Society-ask that they bring along photos of the community and main street during the following times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Early Days of the Community (100+ years ago) around the turn of the century ■ Middle of the 20th Century (50-60 years ago) 1950-1970 Refer to ESI Unit 1 Chapter 8 for Questions for the Historian and Participants
7:15 pm to 7:30 pm	Break
7:30 pm to 8:00 pm	Our Community Today - Community Value Exercise – “Appreciating our Community and It’s Values” (Instructional PDF available – Click here). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good Things About our Community 2. What I Value About our Community
	Supplies needed: Magic Markers, flip chart paper
8:00 pm to 8:45 pm	SPOT Exercise (Instructional PDF available – Click here) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengths 2. Problems 3. Opportunities 4. Threats Supplies Needed: Individual Worksheets, Magic Markers, Flip Chart Paper
8:45 pm to 9:00 pm	Action Items for next session

The challenge will be connecting the young person who wants to stay in the community with business transition opportunities.

Support for Youth Entrepreneurs

Nebraska Extension

Know how. Know now.

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Photo Voice Project



A wonderful activity to get young people into the community and really engage them in learning using a variety of learning modes is to incorporate the suggested Photo Voice Project

Each participant takes digital photos indicative of the Strengths, Problems, Opportunities and Threats they observe in their local community. For example – at least one photo depicting what the individual deems to be a community “Strength”, one for a community “Problem” and so forth. These photos could be sent to one person to collect and put into a photo display or PowerPoint presentation for use in the next session, or each individual can prepare a PowerPoint or video display to show their photos. Once all photos have been viewed, a discussion on what was viewed should take place.

Source: <http://liferaydemo.unl.edu/web/communityconnections/session5/>

Used with permission of UNL 4-H Extension and the Community Connections project directors, Diane Vigna and Nancy Eberle.



SPOT ANALYSIS

Strengths, Problems, Opportunities and Threats

To Conduct a SPOT Analysis, do the following:

Supplies: Flip Chart Paper and Magic markers for each small group.

1. Form into small groups (3-4 people each). Give each group a sheet of flip chart paper. Then have them draw lines to divide flip chart paper into four equal sections. On the top left hand square write the word “Strengths”. On the right top hand square right the word “Problems”. On the bottom left hand square write the word “Opportunities”. On the bottom right hand square write the word “Weaknesses”.
2. Each group should identify a “recorder” and a “reporter”. The recorder keeps track of the ideas in the respective squares on the paper. The reporter will “report” in the group’s results at the end of the exercise.
3. Groups should brainstorm answers to the following questions, and list answers in the appropriate quadrants of the flip chart paper.
 - a. **STRENGTHS** of the community. Questions to use to get started:
 - i. What do you like about this community?
 - ii. Work works well in this community?
 - iii. What do new residents like about the community?
 - iv. What are some of the reasons younger people choose to stay and live in the community?



- b. **PROBLEMS** of the community. Questions to use to get started:
 - i. What needs to be done differently in this community?
 - ii. Work activities, businesses, services do not exist in the community that you would like to have?
 - iii. What are some of the reasons young people choose to leave the community and not return?
 - iv. Do people drive to work in other communities?

- c. **OPPORTUNITIES** that exist in the community. Questions to use to get started:
 - i. What are some of our natural resources?
 - ii. Are there tourist attractions in the community or nearby?
 - iii. Does the quality of the schools and churches attract and keep residents?
 - iv. Are jobs available?
 - v. Where do most people work in the community?
 - vi. What do you see this community becoming?

- d. **THREATS** that exist in the community. Questions to use to get started:
 - i. Look at the problems that were identified – why haven't these problems been addressed by the community?
 - ii. How are decisions made in the community?
 - iii. Who makes decisions in the community?
 - iv. How do people work together in the community to get things done?
 - v. In what ways are all people (different ages, races, gender, and abilities) included in community decisions?

When all groups have completed this exercise, have them report in what they learned – try to capture their ideas on flip chart paper – one sheet for each category. Identify answers that are similar. Discuss results as a group.



Action Item:

Have the group participate in a Photo Voice project. Each participant takes digital photos indicative of the four categories above. For example – at least one photo depicting what the individual deems to be a community “Strength”, one for a community “Problem” and so forth. These photos could be sent to one person to collect and put into a photo display or power point for use in the next session, or each individual can prepare a power point or video display to show their photos. Once all photos have been viewed, a discussion on what was viewed should take place.