Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship

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SUBJECT(S): Entrepreneurship

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

☰ OVERVIEW:

Students will begin this lesson by having a discussion on the definition and true meaning of the word technology. Then, each student will discuss how he or she uses technology in their everyday lives and how the use of that technology affects them. Next, students will read the Knowledge@Wharton article: "'Being Cautious Is to Stop Moving': How Innovation and Entrepreneurship Can Bring Societal Change," and discuss how technology can increase productivity and efficiency in public life. Then, students will work in groups to devise a plan based on how they can use technology to solve a problem in their community.

☰ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Entrepreneurship, I. Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurial Opportunities

☰ RELATED ARTICLES:

- "What Does Entrepreneurship Mean to You?"
- "Topping Off 2020 with Positive Vibes from the 'Good Pizza' Guy"
- "Student Essay: Helping the Older Generation Embrace Technology"
- "Pursuing Careers that Combine Finance with Social Good"
- "Ken Tokusei Talks Technology and Ping-Pong from Inside Google Japan"
- "Future of the Business World: Sanjana Yeddula on Raising Gen Z's Political Awareness"
- "Future of the Business World: Cool Sneakers and 'Creative Destruction' with Jiro Noor"

- "Future of the Business World: A Girl Scout Advocates for Redefining Success"
- "Former Olympian Benjamin Lewis Is Revolutionizing Animal Testing"
- "Entrepreneur Jack Abraham on How Innovation Rises from Ruin"
- "Dear Mark Zuckerberg: Thoughts from Gen Z on the Future of Technology"
- "Career Insight: Jack Abraham on Changing the World through Technological Innovation"
- "Biotech Innovation That Breaks Down Plastic and Feeds the Fish"
- "An Intelligent Glove, a Smartphone App and a Teen's Perspective on What's Missing in School"
- "An Arctic Teen's Viral Tunes Save His Language from Extinction"
- "A Hackathon How-to"

Common Core Standard(s): Vocabulary acquisition and use, knowledge of language, comprehension and collaboration, presentation and knowledge of ideas.

Objectives/Purposes: In this lesson, students will learn how they can use technology to leverage social change.

Knowledge@Wharton Article: "'Being Cautious Is to Stop Moving': How Innovation and Entrepreneurship Can Bring Societal Change"

Other Resources/Materials:

- Butcher paper
- Crayons
- Whiteboard
- Markers
- Dictionary – definition of technology

Activity:

1. *(10 mins)* Begin the lesson by having students work in groups to come up with a definition of the word technology. Then let the groups discuss how they use technology in their everyday lives and whether they think that use of technology makes their lives better, more productive, more efficient, or worse. Have each group share their definitions and responses to the questions. On the whiteboard, make a list of all the different types of technology that students say they use. At the end, share some of the definitions of technology the dictionary offers.

2. *(15 mins)* Have students read the article: "Being Cautious Is to Stop Moving': How Innovation and Entrepreneurship Can Bring Societal Change." Then have students work in groups to discuss the following questions based on the article:

- What are some examples of how technology can make our lives more efficient?
    - In Denmark, IBM is developing a system that will enable ordinary citizens to access healthcare services over the internet.
    - Technology has reduced traffic jams in Stockholm, which has also reduced greenhouse gases.
    - In NYC a mathematical algorithm is used by authorities to predict criminal activity.
- How can technology increase productivity in business?
    - Help to measure the success of initiatives.
    - Redefine the way people share information.
    - Personal use of technology turns into workplace use of technology.
- What are some of the challenges to the use of technology to bring social change?
    - Economic, governmental barriers (Africa).
    - Technology moves rapidly.
    - Glitches in technology.
- In what ways does talent play a role in the arrival of new technology?
    - Need to have people who can innovate.
    - People have to have the talent and courage to know how to make technology useful.
    - People have to understand the problem they are trying to solve, and provide products that are really useful.

3. *(20 mins)* The article mentions that it is demographics that have completely changed the economics of the way we live. This is creating immense opportunities as well as challenges. The article articulates two of these challenges. Divide the class into two groups and give one problem to each of them to devise a way to use technology to solve the problem. The two problems outlined in the article include:

- Every day, 85 million water bottles are thrown away. The pile of bottles in the middle of the Pacific Ocean is twice the size of Texas. How could you utilize technology to solve this problem?
- The global economy will face challenges over the coming decades because of population growth. While 50% of people today live in big cities and 50% in rural areas, over the next 30 to 40 years, 75% will live in cities, and 25% in rural areas, along with a

world population that "is growing exponentially," not in Europe but in the rest of the world, including the U.S. As cities become more crowded, how can you use technology to make one aspect of living in an urban area more socially efficient?

Have each group present their ideas.

Tying It All Together: This article is about showcasing how technology can create social change by increasing productivity and enhancing effectiveness. While it is great for students to leverage these tools for the greater good, encourage them to also think about how the web can be used to do the same. The great thing about websites is that students can use them to create social change with relatively low startup costs.

Practice Outside of the Classroom: Have students think about how they use the Internet. What sites can they visit or build that would benefit one aspect of society? Also, tell them about sites that contribute donations when visitors use them, like freerice.com.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: One alternative to the group work activity is to have students create a website that is a social entrepreneurial venture. I did this with one of the classes I taught and students really liked the activity. They also came up with some great ideas that seemed very feasible and had the potential to have a high impact in their respective areas. The criteria that I had students meet for their sites were: the site must make money, it must address a social cause, it must be interactive for the users, and students had to design the layout and function of the site.