

EntrePOWER

Empowering those with special needs through entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship Promotion Project

**Danvers DECA
Danvers High School
60 Cabot Road
Danvers, MA 01923**

**Mike Plansky
Brendan Powers
Liam Callahan**

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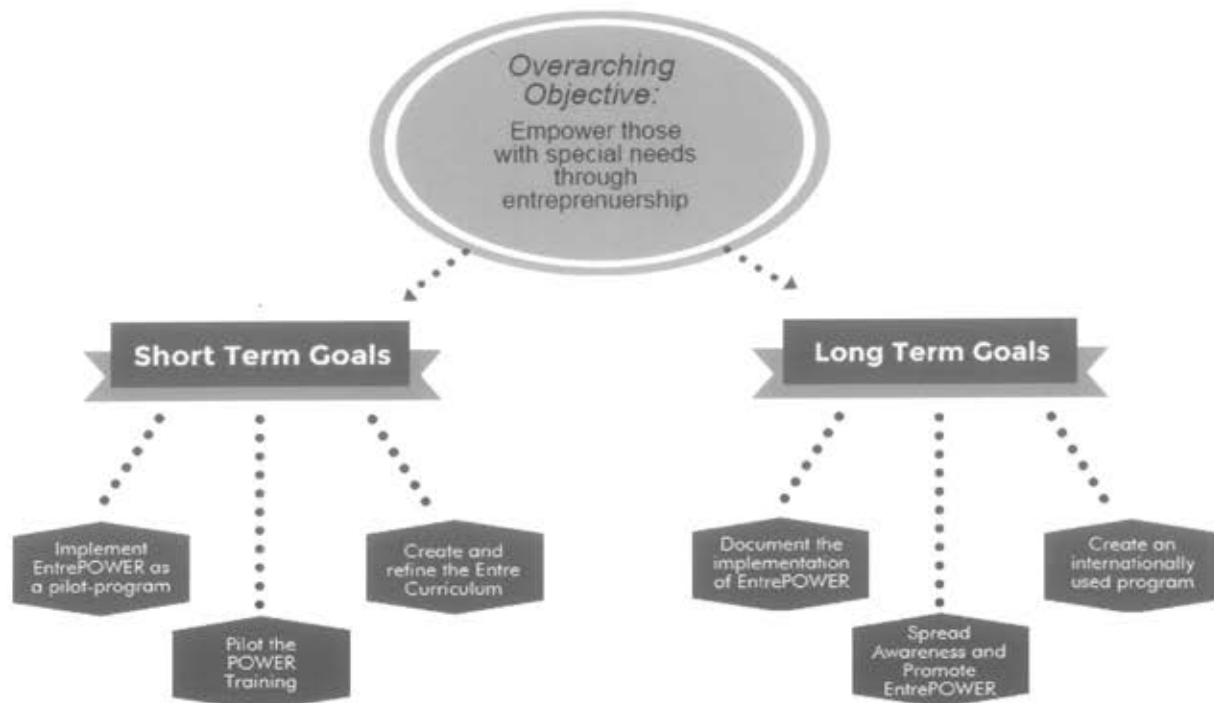
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Purpose:

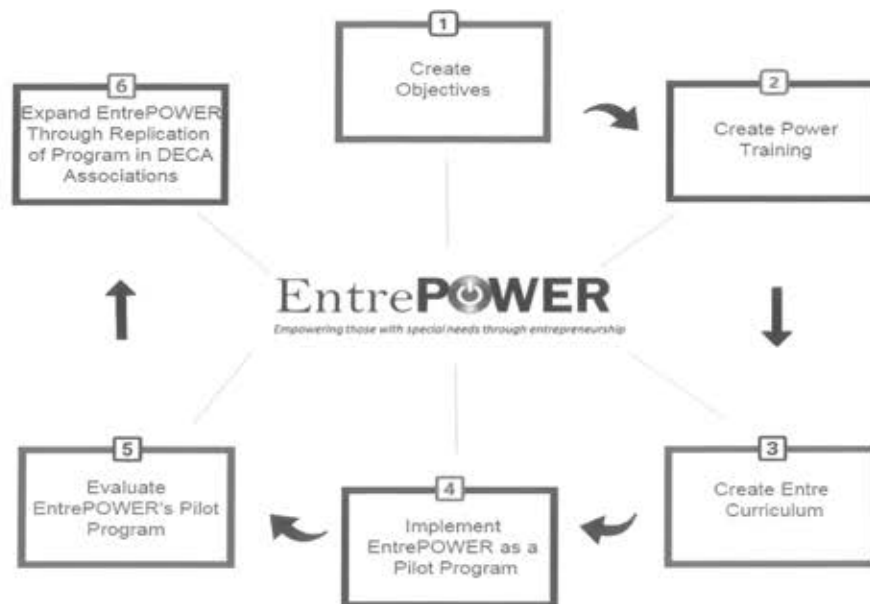
The EntrePOWER Program's purpose is to empower those with special needs through entrepreneurship. As of now, transition programs, or life skills programs, are the most commonly utilized curriculums for special education students between the ages of 14-22 years old in the public school system. These types of programs limit the capabilities and creativity that all special education students possess. Due to these programs, individuals with special needs are not given the opportunities to prove their abilities to employers. Because of this, nearly **80% of individuals with special needs over the age of 21 are unemployed**. And this number hasn't changed in **over 20 years**. After seeing first-hand the abilities that special education students possess, our group believes that the unemployment rate is an obstacle that can be surpassed by all. With the EntrePOWER Program, we will create innovative mindsets for special needs students and empower them to believe they *can make a difference in the world*. The interactive, student centered program we have created builds a partnership between the special education teachers, business teachers, and DECA members, working in synergy to empower each student through entrepreneurship.

Our Objectives:



To simplify and organize objectives, we created one overarching objective and then divided that into smaller, more focused objectives. Our one overarching objective is to **empower special education students through entrepreneurship**. The next set of objectives includes short-term goals that we hope to achieve in the present day, while creating and implementing the EntrePOWER Program. This set of objectives is necessary to achieve for our program to obtain initial success. Once our short-term objectives have been accomplished, we will initiate the process of realizing our long-term goals, which will drive the EntrePOWER Program into attaining our overarching objective.

Our Plan:



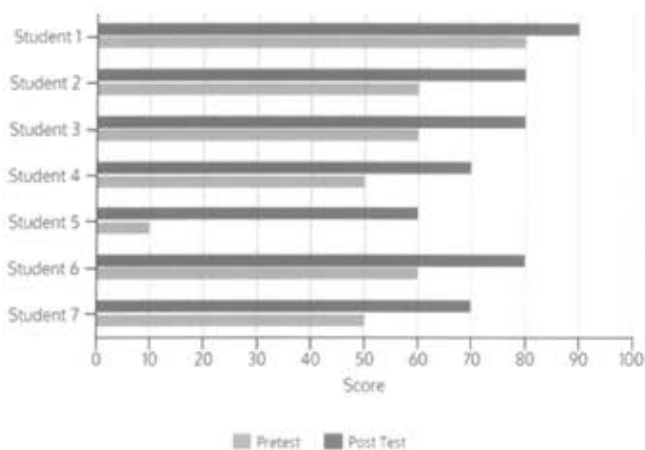
The first step in the planning and organizational process of the EntrePOWER program was to create strategic objectives that met the purpose of the program. The next step of our planning process was deciding how to implement the EntrePOWER Program efficiently. We divided the program into two phases: a training phase and a teaching phase. The training phase was to educate all DECA members who would volunteer in the EntrePOWER Program. We created the POWER Training method to help educate our chapter members on how to work with this population of students. P.O.W.E.R. is an acronym for *Positive, Observe, Work together, Energy, and Reason*. Our next step is the teaching phase. We created the Entre Curriculum in which E.N.T.R.E. is an acronym that stands for *Entrepreneurs, New product development, Target markets, Research, and Elements of pricing and promotion*. Once we refined both the POWER Training and Entre Curriculum, we implemented our EntrePOWER pilot-program at Danvers High School.

Our Implementation:

In our pilot program, we chose ten of our DECA chapter members who volunteered to work with the EntrePOWER program. Our group coordinated with our special education teacher, Mr. Travers, to schedule time during the school day to go into the classroom and work with the special education students. Implementation took approximately five weeks, just as we expected in the planning process. Below were the steps taken in order to complete our implementation:

- ☑ Recruited DECA members and implemented POWER Training
- ☑ Worked collaboratively with Mr. Travers and implemented Entre Curriculum with special education students
 - Participants in the EntrePOWER program administered a pre-test
 - Implementation of five lesson plans with the corresponding mini projects, “Sparks”
 - Completion of implementation led to special education students engaging in one final project, entitled the *Activate* project
- ☑ Fully evaluated the implementation of our pilot-program

Our Evaluation:



Although numbers and statistics are relevant, the improvement in the student's creativity, motivation, and self-confidence is immeasurable. These observations demonstrated the true purpose of EntrePOWER. We utilized focus groups at the end of implementing our pilot-program as our qualitative research method. We asked several EntrePOWER recipients, volunteers, Mr. Travers, and Ms. Beaulieu one simple question: explain your experience in the EntrePOWER program? From the highlighted quotes shown, our program had a profound impact on all stakeholders and inspired students to learn about and become entrepreneurs.

With only a few subjective issues to improve upon, our pilot-program highlights that the planning, organization, and implementation of the EntrePOWER Program was a success. Through the triumph of our pilot-program, we spread EntrePOWER's purpose throughout our school's DECA and special education classrooms. We hope to continue this success so that other classrooms around the world can experience the EntrePOWER Program.

Our Future:

- Expand on a state-level with our already achieved Massachusetts DECA endorsement for 2016-2017
 - Distribute each chapter advisor a copy of the EntrePOWER booklet: *Educator Edition*
 - Offer a webinar after the 2016 state conference and hold a workshop at the 2016 Fall State Leadership Conference for advisors
- Partner with state vocational rehabilitation organizations to help employ and give benefits to EntrePOWER recipients
- Enhance our current EntrePOWER website so that all EntrePOWER resources are accessible on one online platform
- Implement an online alumni program for all volunteers, teachers, and students who partake in EntrePOWER worldwide
- Continue connecting with DECA Inc. to replicate the program within DECA internationally

One of our quantitative evaluation methods was collecting data through a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test was given before implementation of the Entre Curriculum and the post-test was given at the completion of the program. **All students' post-test score went up compared to their pre-test score.** The class average for the pre-test was a 53%, whereas the class average for the post-test was a 76%. The class average percent increase from pre-test to post-test score was 43%. These values clearly indicate that the Entre Curriculum was successful in implementing the concepts through teaching special education students entrepreneurship.

"I felt as though I could put my creative ideas to life. It was basically life-changing!"

Sophie

EntrePOWER
Recipient



"I was able to create friendships with other students while learning business. I really enjoyed volunteering."

Stelio

Volunteer



"I was blown away by the creativity I saw from my students. We don't get to do stuff like this in the class..."

Mr. Travers

Special Education
Teacher



"The DECA students were expecting to *teach* the special needs students, they did not expect to *learn* so much from them!"

Ms. Beaulieu

Marketing Teacher

