

**Title of Presentation:** Route 21: From Agrarian to Imagination Economies

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**Topic Keyword Identifiers:** youth entrepreneurship and 21<sup>st</sup> century career & life skills

**Summary of Program Overview / Topic:** Supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the NC 4-H program continues to implemented a multi-faceted youth entrepreneurship program that incorporates both 21<sup>st</sup> century Life and Career Skills and interdisciplinary 21<sup>st</sup> century themes including: financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, global awareness, civic engagement and health literacy. Our program is building on the current research findings that that support learning benefits for youth who build authentic products with tools – whether they be sand castles, computer programs, documents, graphs, LEGO constructions, or musical compositions. This presentation is intended to expand participant’s knowledge of the growing research supporting youth entrepreneurship and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills through an interactive program overview that outlines the foundation of our program and shares outcomes. It is important for the Extension System to make changes in both content and delivery strategies in order to fulfill its mission to society, namely the preparation of youth for a world beyond the classroom. Therefore, our Extension System must acknowledge that the Extension programs of yesterday are not sufficient for today. To adequately prepare, youth must learn content within the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.



## **Background**

As part of its 75th anniversary celebration, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched a project called *Entrepreneurship Development Systems for America*. Through \$12 million in grants, the foundation is helping regional leaders establish comprehensive community networks that support the growth and development of entrepreneurs and their job-creating ventures. The national project also is expected to promote information sharing on effective practices in entrepreneurial development and to stimulate increased state and national interest in rural entrepreneurship policies and strategies.

Six regional projects, including a collaborative North Carolina project, were selected to receive grants of \$2 million each over three years. Other winning projects are based in Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota and West Virginia. Members of all six teams will meet regularly with Kellogg Foundation representatives to share their experiences and insights.

As part of North Carolina's initiative, a large group of state agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities and community colleges formed the N.C. Business Resource Alliance to assess and improve K-12 education and services for small businesses throughout the state.

The project seeks to improve and broaden entrepreneurial education; and support services in the state's 85 rural counties, ensuring that they reach current and prospective entrepreneurs in their home communities. Special emphasis is directed to regions with persistently high levels of poverty and to African American, Hispanic and American Indian communities, who have often been underserved by current programs.

Plans encompass five approaches to improving the entrepreneurial development system:

- Education.
- Technical assistance,
- Financial capital.
- Business networks, and
- Leadership and policy development.

## **Program Summary**

Mastery of core subjects and 21<sup>st</sup> Century themes is essential for today's youth. While schools focus primarily on core subjects (English, reading, math, science, history, etc.) the NC 4-H Youth Development's program entitled *Route 21* utilized a multi faceted program model including: a professional development series for NC Extension's field faculty on 21<sup>st</sup> Century & Life; a targeted K-12 teachers education program; and a layered youth program format that engaged youth in the planning and delivery of programs aimed at enhancing their learning capacity. Our program utilized the Rigor/Relevance Framework to focus on the following emerging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Themes:

Global Awareness, Financial, Economic, Business & **Entrepreneurship Literacy**, Civic Literacy and Health Literacy.

The Rigor/Relevance Framework is a tool developed by the International Center for Leadership in Education to examine curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The Rigor/Relevance Framework is based on two dimensions of higher standards and student achievement.

First, there is the Knowledge Taxonomy, a continuum based on the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, which describes the increasingly complex ways in which we think. The low end involves acquiring knowledge and being able to recall or locate that knowledge. The high end labels the more complex ways in which individuals use knowledge, such as taking several pieces of knowledge and combining them in both logical and creative ways.

The second continuum, known as the Application Model, is one of action. Its five levels describe putting knowledge to use. While the low end is knowledge acquired for its own sake, the high end signifies use of that knowledge to solve complex real-world problems and to create unique projects, designs, and other works for use in real-world situations.

The Rigor/Relevance Framework has four quadrants. Each is labeled with a term that characterizes the learning or student performance at that level.

During the three-year program, including a one-year planning cycle, over 90,000 youth, 800 teachers and 300+ volunteers participated in Route 21.

Ongoing evaluation program included formative, process and outcome components with approximately, 1,200 youth and adults taking part in various evaluation processes (pre-post survey, focus groups, case studies, etc.). Data and evaluation conclusions are scheduled to be released in early 2009.