

The Miami Herald

Entrepreneurship grows in Florida's classrooms

After years of taking a backseat, entrepreneurship education has finally taken center stage as corporations and institutions realize the tremendous importance, and value, of instilling entrepreneurship skills in education and learning. So much so that in 2006, Florida's Department of Education initiated the development of an entrepreneurial major for high school students under Gov. Bush's A++ Plan for Education.

In response to the pressing need for entrepreneurship education specifically in South Florida, two organizations have banded together.

NFTE, which began in 1987 as a program to prevent inner-city students from dropping out of school, has blossomed into a highly successful organization teaching entrepreneurship, business and leadership skills in 47 states and 16 countries, impacting more than 150,000 students worldwide. The South Florida office opened its doors in January 2006 and has since trained 52 teachers who are teaching more than 2,000 students in schools and community-based organizations this school year.

Whether in the arts, sciences, business, engineering or humanities, the Eugenio Pino and Family Global Entrepreneurship Center strives to make entrepreneurship an important part of education at FIU. It facilitates all entrepreneurial activities at FIU with the support of the College of Business Administration, the College of Engineering and Computing Sciences, and the College of Arts & Sciences.

The importance of teaching

entrepreneurship to today's students cannot be overestimated. This approach to education benefits our entire community and the economy. Small businesses are driving our region as we transform into a "knowledge-based economy." Entrepreneurship education provides essential training for this new economy by creating awareness, while also teaching students business skills, critical thinking and the applications of technology. These skills are essential to bridge the economic divide for the high percentage of students in our schools who come from minority and low-income communities.

Alice Horn

Executive director
National Foundation
for Teaching
Entrepreneurship Center

Alan L. Carsrud, Ph.D.

Executive director
Eugenio Pino and Family
Global Entrepreneurship
Center, Florida International
University