

Startup aims to teach youth creativity, leadership skills

A new startup launched by Honolulu-based social entrepreneur Steve Sue is focused on providing students with the kinds of "soft skills" they need to succeed in the 21st century.

What are soft skills? They include creativity, innovation, emotional intelligence, leadership and an array of other thinking and interpersonal skills, Sue pointed out.

But soft skills remain elusive in 3-R and STEM-driven curricula. And with computer automation eroding knowledge-based jobs every day, skills that computers cannot easily replace are increasing in value.

"There's no mystery as to why innovation and entrepreneurship are trending," Sue said. "They represent the way for kids to compete and even beat computers. Frankly, if you want your kid to win in the coming years, soft skills in combination with STEM and other traditional knowledge bases are key to success."

To equip students with these skills, Sue created BizzyB, an online entrepreneurial-based learning platform where students complete goal-oriented projects. The target audience is youth in grades eight through 12.

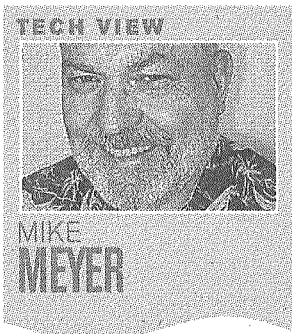
"Business is simply about solving problems," Sue said. "If you solve a problem or create value, customers pay. So entrepreneurship, as a startup version of business, provides a perfect backdrop for problem-based learning."

BizzyB is therefore designed as an app store of business adventures. Typical projects include creating a lemonade stand, craft, game or stage show business. Students can complete the adventures on their own or in teams.

"I believe in teamwork," Sue said, "so BizzyB is designed with built-in roles that teach students leadership skills, respective roles in a startup business and how to work well with others."

BizzyB also includes just-in-time learning pop-ups, mobile mentoring feedback and soft skills assessment systems. And there's an emphasis on sharing success with others.

"We're promoting positive business values to help students be self-starting, innovative and helpful people," Sue said. Specifically, goal-setting promotes positive impacts on people, planet and profit.



As the founder of Lemonade Alley, Camp BizGym and the nonprofit BizGym Foundation, Sue is no stranger to social ventures that teach entrepreneurship to young people. He also serves on the Entrepreneurs Foundation of Hawaii board and is a past Junior Achievement board member.

DURING the first six years of the Lemonade Alley kid-biz challenge, students raised over \$57,000 for 36 different charities. Beneficiaries included Make-a-Wish Foundation, Wounded Warrior Project and the Hawaiian Humane Society. Lemonade sales even supported WaterAid, a charity that digs wells for impoverished villagers in Nepal.

As for BizzyB, it's a youth-oriented version of Sue's for-profit BizGym.com entrepreneurial growth platform. Sue is developing BizzyB through a \$1-a-year BizGym platform license and additional grant funding of over \$1 million from the Hoag Foundation and Google.

Early exploratory partnerships include programs with the University of Hawaii College of Education's Center for Disabilities Studies (STEMD2). There's also a summer program (MIT Launch) associated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Sue is also working with the state Department of Education, the Kaimuki-McKinley-Roosevelt Complex Area District and Kamehameha Schools.

BizzyB's alpha launch is scheduled for late July and will include several business adventures on a web-based app.

Additional adventures and mobile versions of BizzyB will be featured during a symposium presentation at the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences in January.

Sue encourages schools, teachers and youth organizations to inquire about partnering opportunities by visiting bizzyb.com.

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