

Empowering Students as Citizen Entrepreneur Explorers: A Transformative Program for Innovation and Community Impact

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What is the Citizen Entrepreneur Explorer Program (CEEP)?

- Using an experiential learning approach we challenge students to think critically about their local economic ecosystems.
- The Citizen Entrepreneur Explorer Program (CEEP) asks students to engage with local communities to identify and address the needs of their neighborhoods.

What are the 6 steps of CEEP?



During the program students develop an original research question, collect and analyze data and most importantly report their findings back to the community.

- There are five main steps of CEEP that guide our students through their research processes.
 - Step 1: Community Outreach** — Students begin to make initial connections with a community group in the area. After the research is completed they will present their findings to this group for feedback.
 - Step 2: Research Question** — Next students develop an open-ended original research question
 - Step 3: Research Methods** — Once a research question is chosen, students decide which methodology (e.g., qualitative, quantitative) best suits their research question.
 - Step 4: Data Collection** — During this step student gather information by administering surveys or conducting interviews
 - Step 5: Data Analysis** — Lastly, students organize and interpret results.
 - Step 6: Report Back** – Present research back to the community.

Student Project Showcase

Here are a few snapshots of exemplar student projects from our program.

A Solviany

Overview

Solviany conducted three trials to investigate why nail salons in her neighborhood of Elmhurst, Queens, have experienced stagnated business in recent months.

Methods

- interviews with employees and owners of nail salons in Elmhurst, Queens. Interviews lasted 5-10 minutes.
- Observations of four different nail salons on the selection and quality of services provided.

Findings

- Many nail salon employees she interviewed did not provide very personalized services (e.g., designs).
- In comparison, independent nail technicians with more training and expertise provided more tailored customer services.
- Due to an appointment-based system, nail techs can offer more attention to their customers, contributing to higher customer retention.

Community Impact

After presenting her findings, her local community center encouraged her to explore how the pandemic has affected nail salons in Queens.

B Steven

Research Question

How do I cater to immigrant groups in the Bronx & Manhattan?

Overview

Steven talked with several Dominican deli owners in the Washington Heights area to figure out how they started their businesses and what hardships they faced in order to start their delis.

Methods

- Interviews with two Deli owners and a representative from the Bronx community board.
- Questions asked: What are the expectations that fellow Dominicans have in terms of being a Hispanic Deli owner?, what obstacles did you face as a young Hispanic in the early 2000s?, and what made you so interested in the community?"

Findings

Steven found that many deli owners encountered many obstacles in starting their business ranging from people looking down on them for being immigrants, to not being able to form a connection, to not being able to market their business in the way one can market today.

C Camila

Research Question

How do larger chain stores impact the advertising strategies smaller boutiques use?

Overview

Camila was interested in investigating the impact of big-box chain stores in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She decided to conduct an observational study to examine foot traffic patterns of a local boutique and a popular big box clothing store located in the same shopping center.

Methods

- Observed # of customers entering a local box chain clothing store and # of customers entering a local boutique specializing in summer clothing and beachwear.

Findings

- For 55 minutes, she counted a total of 93 people entering the big box chain store compared to only five customers who entered the small boutique.
- Foot traffic to the smaller store remained low even as people passed to enter the chain store.

Community Outreach

At the Coral Ridge Presbyterian church several community members expressed surprise at her findings that the larger clothing store did not boost foot traffic for smaller businesses.

D Alyssa

Overview

Alyssa analyzed the presence of hypoallergenic and vegan beauty products in a variety of different stores. Her interest in creating her own vegan cosmetic business inspired her research project. She aimed to examine the accessibility of vegan and hypoallergenic products in her neighborhood.

Methods

- Examined three businesses within her local neighborhood; Target, Walgreens, and a local beauty supply store.
- Organized beauty products into a systematic catalog to compare products.

Findings

Interestingly, the local beauty supply store carried more vegan and hypoallergenic cosmetic products than larger retailers like Target and Walgreens. However, the beauty supply store sold more vegan items in general than hypoallergenic.

Frequency of Vegan & Hypoallergenic Products

Business	Vegan Products	Hypoallergenic products
Walgreens	14	11
Target	11	9
Beauty Supply Stores	70	10

Get Involved with CEEP!

- The Citizen Entrepreneur Explorer Program is always looking for new partners and collaborators to expand our mission of providing experiential learning opportunities to college students.
- To learn more about how to get involved or learn more about CEEP, administrators and faculty can email Professor Shane Snipes at rsnipes@bmcc.cuny.edu with inquiries.

Why should you get involved?

- Administrators:** Increase students' entrepreneurial research opportunities by hosting and partnering with CEEP at your institution.
- Faculty:** Increase students' understanding of and engagement with entrepreneurial research by signing up to participate in CEEP.
- Students:** Through CEEP you'll receive hands on experience with conducting original research, networking opportunities, and more!

Connect with us on our website and social media!

Instagram: @eshipbmcc
Website: Citizenpreneurs.com
Free CEEP
Resources: www.bit.ly/ceep2022

Team Contact Information

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Link to our community sign up page to get started with CEEP!

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