

Teaching Entrepreneurship

Posted by: John Tozzi on April 17



NFTE's top Global Entrepreneurs (*Photo by Margaret Fox*)

The [National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship](#) held its annual awards ceremony last night in New York, an event that brought together young entrepreneurs from across the country and the world, as well as educators and supporters.

NFTE is a national nonprofit that teaches entrepreneurship skills to high school and middle school students globally (currently active in 13 countries). The foundation honored 30 student entrepreneurs who presented conference-style at booths, which each had a crowd in front of them. I spotted student businesses from as far as Germany and Zimbabwe. The business ideas ranged from consumer products (T-shirts, flip flops) and services (lawn care, tutoring, video production) to social ventures like the Problem Solvers League, a mentoring program in Chicago-area schools.

But I think more important than the individual business ideas is the idea of entrepreneurship as a skill that people should learn as a matter of course. NFTE points to [this speech](#) by President Obama in which he calls for “standards and assessments that don’t simply measure whether students can fill in a bubble on a test, but whether they possess 21st century skills like problem-solving and critical thinking, entrepreneurship and creativity.”

Our hyper-connected world rewards people who think creatively and move quickly. That’s a fundamental shift from the industrial era. The people and companies that succeed will need the same skills NFTE teaches — whether they start their own businesses or work within larger organizations. Our education system, itself a legacy of the industrial era, too often fails to prepare students to experiment, develop new ideas, and work independently. Reshaping how we teach and learn to train a more entrepreneurial workforce will be important to the economy going forward.