

Idea Factory 2009

27th Annual Entrepreneurship Education FORUM

Norfolk Virginia

Ideas shared during the Idea Factory session are summarized below so that you can utilize them when you are working with aspiring or practicing entrepreneurs. The ideas were shared during a two hour session designed to allow for sharing useful ideas for teachers and trainers to use with their students/participants as they work to advance their Entrepreneurship Education. All attendees worked hard in the Idea Factory to share ideas that Entrepreneurship Educators can use effectively as they work with students.

As you read the ideas and have ideas to add send them to Horace.robertson@mindspring.com He is delighted to post electronic items that include descriptions of ideas or worksheets that others might find helpful. One way the Consortium for Entrepreneurship assists its member groups is by accepting ideas and placing them in a repository and allowing others to learn from those Entrepreneurship Educators who are effective in this field.

- **Future CEO Stars magazine** can be used effectively by checking out the Teacher Guide posted monthly on the www.fcsmag.com website and then making use of the magazine articles to help students develop problem solving skills. The materials in the Teacher Guide do not have answers as the learning activities are generally open ended problem solving activities that are based on components of the National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education..
- It is suggested that all Youth Entrepreneurship Educators provide to all their student's parents a "**free subscription**" to the Future CEO Stars Magazine as a way of helping them to connect with the student who is the aspiring entrepreneur. Also assignments can be made that allow for dialogue between parent and students based upon an article or articles in the monthly magazine. This is one way we can help create a more entrepreneurial mind set among those who are advising youth regarding their futures. Parents often think first of getting a job and are not focused on how their son or daughter can succeed as an entrepreneur.
- Teachers can always use the articles in the Future CEO Stars as an information base for the students and then have assignments to **summarize orally or in writing** (Depending on the skills – Speaking or Writing they are trying to develop) how they could use **what they learned to start their own businesses**. If you have a **blog** going with your students you could make an assignment for each student to post at least one blog addressing how they could use what they learned.
- **Google Ad Words** is a great learning tool for students. You can "Google" Google Ad Words and see the opportunity for students to learn and compete at the Google site. It links with promotion concepts very nicely.
- **Thinkertoys**: a handbook of creative thinking techniques by Michael Michalko is a good instructional tool to help change the way we think. It is a 400+ page resource of ideas that allow instructors and trainers to have learning activities for creative thinking at their finger tips.
- **Creative thinking Roman Numerical activity** – Ask students to write down $XI + I = X$ – Then ask them to put down their pencils. Next ask them if that is a true mathematical statement? After thought they will generally reply **no**. Next ask if they can make it a true statement without using their pencil. (Clue – Turn the paper on which they wrote upside down and it will read $X = I + IX$)

→ **Open ended questions or problems** – Use open ended questions and problems to promote thinking among aspiring entrepreneurs and to cement into their minds that there are more than one correct answer to the same question. The response of entrepreneurs that is the most successful is the one that offers the most value to the client!

→ **Creative Design Activity** – Provide students a stack of old newspapers, some colored duct tape, and some string. Set the scenario as you have just arrived on the planet earth and you have only the supplies provided and your imagination to outfit your people. You are to work in teams of 3-5 students to create, on one of your team members the outfit you desire to represent your people on planet earth. Allow time for the activity and then let each team share the outfit in a fashion show format. Model the outfits (Be sure to take Pictures to prove the creativity of the groups) and have the team share why they created the outfit as they did. Allow the groups to share what creative portions of specific outfits they think might add most value to the users.

→ **Tallest Tower Competition** – Provide students with a collection of uncooked spaghetti noodles, large and small marshmallows, and Gum Drops (spice candies). Organize the students into groups of from 3-5 student team members challenge them to build the tallest tower possible with the resources provided. (All teams have the same amount of supplies) Provide time to complete the tower, take pictures and allow teams to learn from one another the techniques they tried in order to build the tallest tower. Also allow time to process some of the team discoveries that occurred. You could also have observers to observe the activity and report the team building/working aspect of the project.

→ **Dots Activity** – When using the typical dot matrix where students are accustomed to connecting the dots without taking their pencils from the paper. Change it up and have them find one dot that they can move to create a specific letter of the alphabet. Circle the letter when it is in place and share it with others. This activity helps to get students to think outside of the box.

Another variation is to have students create happy/smiley faces by connecting the dots and then share with the total group the many different ways that students thought of as they approached this task.

→ **Spelling of Entrepreneurial Terms** – Create word searches or scrambled word searches that include the words that you want students to learn to spell. As the students find the words have them share the spelling or define them so that you can check understanding. (Can be oral or written activity) Software such as <http://www.wordsearchprinter.com/> can be used to assist with the development of the instructional activities.

→ **Problems as entrepreneurial opportunities** – Ask students to take out their cell phones and spend some time talking about “the problem with this cell phone”. After numerous problems are identified, spend time talking about possible solutions to the problems identified. Talk about whether any of the proposed solutions would amount to “value added” that consumers would be willing to pay for. Help students understand that a “Better Mouse Trap” is often the innovation that allows an inventor or innovator to become a successful entrepreneur.

→ **Targets for Innovations** – After using an activity regarding problems turned to innovations such as, Problems as entrepreneurial opportunities, shown above, focus on thinking about the target audience for the specific innovation that is suggested to solve the problem. Try to determine if the target audience is large enough to support the cost of the innovation.

→ **Response feedback software** – To determine if students understand concepts use the response feedback clickers to allow students to respond to questions that the teacher prepares as an introductory or a summary activity for concepts. If your school does not have the clicker devices

you can download software from <http://www.polleverywhere.com/> and allow students to use their cell phones to respond to your questions. The software is free for classrooms use if you are working with less than 30 students at the time. Poll America has similar soft ware.

→ **Summarize Blogs or Internet Searches** – After making assignments that guide students to blogs and Internet searches have them either orally or in writing summarize what the posts or the searches revealed about the assignment. Help students learn to evaluate and summarize information gained from the Internet so that they can know what is valid and useful information.

→ **Developing a website** – Make an assignment to develop a website to address a specific communication need of an organization, a person, or an event. Help in developing the skills essential to website development can be gained from a CD that has been developed by the Nebraska 4-H organization. You can see the entrepreneurship curriculum and the CD to guide the students at <http://4hcurriculum.unl.edu/catalog/entrepreneurship.html> . The cost of the CD is \$7.50.

→ **Attention Getter** – Bring into the classroom beautiful gift bags or boxes filled with 2-3 inexpensive items that you have gathered to present to each student. Ask that they not open them until you have given them permission to do so. Proceed to provide the instruction or introduction to the activity as you have their focused attention. Next, tell them that they may open the bags/boxes. When they open the bag/boxes they may be disappointed that the inexpensive items do not match up to the expectations of the beautiful gift bags/boxes. Next ask them to take the items from their pockets or purses that could be used with the items in the bag/box to add value. Provide awards for the student who seems to create the most value with things they have with them. (This learning activity helps them focus on their creativity or innovation skills)

→ **Innovative Thinking** – Group student in teams ranging from 3-5 students. Ask each student to take two items from their pockets or purses and place them into the center of the table. Allow students time to talk about how they could combine any two of the items on the table to provide something of value. Focus the discussion of the activity around creating additional value from existing products as one way that innovators become successful entrepreneurs. Provide rewards for the most effective value added combination.

→ **View of the World** – Purchase various inexpensive sun glasses and place them in a bag. Allow students to draw out one pair and put them on. As they continue with the sun glasses on ask them to describe how they view certain objects that all students can view. Determine if others see the objects in the same colors or manner as others are describing. Follow through with the discussion of how individuals look with different sun glasses on. Perhaps take a group picture to keep around to allow students to remember how different we can be and how we can see things differently.

→ **Entrepreneurial Venture** – Plan an effort with students to operate a business, to include planning for financing, operating, promoting and accounting for performance and profits if any. Students learn many entrepreneurial/business skills as they manage the project. One teacher organizes a restaurant operation in her small town with 5th grade student to provide the students the experience of planning and operating an entrepreneurial venture. They operate the restaurant for just one evening. Parents help in the kitchen with the food preparation, students dressed in black trousers and white shirts/blouses do all the server/dining room duties. Local entrepreneurs have tables throughout the room from which they can interact with the 5th graders about their entrepreneurial ventures and experiences.

TREP\$ is one organization with connections to CEE and it's performance indicators that provides materials for teaching and training 4th through 8th grade students for a market place venture. The six week initiative allows parents to provide an in-school or after-school training to prepare

students for opening their first business. You can find details at <http://www.trepsted.com/> The materials have been developed by PTA mothers who saw the need for their own children to develop the entrepreneurial mind set.

→ **Summer Camp project** – Students are asked to go through their home storage areas and locate things that are not being used. (They can not purchase something for use at the camp) They ask permission from parents, brothers, and sisters, etc. for taking the unused materials to camp. At camp the assignment is made to create something of value from the items they brought to camp. The students can see how to innovate from one product to something that is enhanced to add value that consumers are willing to pay for as one way that innovators become successful entrepreneurs.

→ **What do you know?** – Focus the students on interviewing each other about what are their interests. As students talk about their interests, the interview should delve deeper into what the students know about areas of their interest. Helping students understand that the areas of their interest may be the key to their entrepreneurial venture. Teachers may help students develop the interview questions and techniques to drive the conversation. Allow students to spend time with some reflective writing to process their interests and the entrepreneurial connection possibilities.

→ **Stand and Deliver** – Students are requested to stand up in the classroom when ever they speak for a period of time. This is a way of developing in the students the skills they will need as entrepreneurs when they make presentations to seek funding, to sell ideas or to convince others to join with the initiative in some partnership efforts. By standing and being on their feet they will learn to project their voices better and will focus eye contact etc to become better presenters.

→ **Success breeds Success** – Bring back successful entrepreneurs who have completed the courses or program that you are now teaching. Students respond to role models whose age is not much older than theirs. Some teachers have students 5-6 years removed from the course or program that can relate to the current students how what they learned has helped them in their current ventures.

Bringing back speakers, allows for the development of relationships that can provide mentors, on student projects, and future ventures. The education of current students can be greatly enhanced by previous students.

→ **Big Brother- Big Sister Concept** – As with the “Success breeds Success” idea above connecting students with a mentor who agrees to provide the guidance and mentorship for a student can greatly enhance the education and training offered. Connecting persons who are gifted in sharing their expertise, tough love, and encouragement can assist aspiring entrepreneurs as they seek to learn, plan and actualize their entrepreneurial dream.

→ **Green Biz** - <http://www.greenbiz.com/> is a website that can be of assistance to those teachers who are being asked to help students focus on green initiatives. The Pew Charitable Trust has developed a report that shares how much the clean economy has impacted business. http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Clean_Economy_Report_Web.pdf This report has a view of each state and the clean/green jobs that are emerging. It can help emerging and practicing entrepreneurs understand what is considered a green job and opportunities in various industries.

→ **Invention Fairs** – The Market Place for Kids program <http://www.marketplaceforkids.org/> based in North Dakota has materials for teachers to use with students from 3rd grade through 8th grade. These materials allow teachers to prepare students to share their innovations and bright ideas at the Market place. Students focus on solving problems and presenting solutions.

→ **Job Sharing Communication** – Students working in school based enterprises (such as a school store) often ask their teacher to relay a message to another students related to the business operation. The situation allows the teacher to teach effective communication between workers who share jobs. The teacher steps out of the process and teaches students how to use available technologies such as e-mail, voicemail, or simple post it notes to communicate the needed information in order to be effective business operators. Teaching job sharing communication skills prepares students to be more effective in workplaces.

→ **Locating Business Organizations** – Students are taken into a business district and asked to identify all the businesses by the **type** of business, such as Bank, Retail clothing, Beauty Shop, Barber shop, etc. They also have to identify the **type of ownership** of each of the businesses, such as independently owned, franchise, corporation, chain operation, etc. The student with the most businesses listed, properly identified by type, and with the most accurate ownership categorization will be rewarded with a reward. This activity can help students identify and use the terms that you will desire to teach to aspiring entrepreneurs.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU....

If you can "PLUS" these ideas (add your own modifications) or supply other great ideas, send them to:

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