Entrepreneurship Activities Curriculum

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Table of Contents

These lessons focus on a variety of topics relating to entrepreneurship. Each lesson is a standalone lesson that can be used to teach participants about what it is like to be, think, and act like an entrepreneur.

Curriculum Structure

The *Entrepreneurship Activities Curriculum* is composed of the following lessons. Approximate lesson times are included.

Lesson	Title	Approximate Time
One	The Value Proposition	40-55 minutes
Two	Defining the Problem	35-45 minutes
Three	Applying Creative Thinking	65-140 minutes
	Total	**2 1/2 – 4 hours**

Lesson Structure

Each lesson begins with a Lesson Overview, Lesson Objectives, and a Lesson at a Glance table that lists lesson activities, materials required, suggested preparation steps, and approximate class time.

Lesson Sections

The actual lesson follows the overview, which contains some of the sections described below.

FOCUS
Every lesson begins with a FOCUS activity intended to capture participants' attention. This may be in the form of a small or large class discussion, a game, a demonstration, or a review of previous lesson information. During this activity, participants are introduced to the topic of the lesson.

LEARN
The LEARN activity in each lesson varies in its presentation mode. It may be a slide presentation, group activity, or demonstration.

REVIEW
The majority of lessons end with a REVIEW activity intended to briefly review the lesson's key messages or main points.

Lesson One – The Value Proposition

Lesson Overview

A value proposition is a simple statement that summarizes why a customer would choose your product or service. Every value proposition should speak to a customer's challenge and make the case for your company as the problem-solver.Participants need to learn to articulate this in a concise way.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Define what an entrepreneur is
- Define what a value proposition is
- Create a concise value proposition for a business concept or product
- Self-assess whether they would make a good entrepreneur or not

Lesson at a Glance

Activity	Materials	Preparation	Approximate class time
FOCUS	• Videos about entrepreneurship • *A Day in the Life of an Entrepreneur* worksheet	1. Print/photocopy *A Day in the Life of an Entrepreneur (*one per participant)	10 minutes
LEARN	• Access to the internet • Paper and pen/pencil • *The Value Proposition* worksheet	1. Print/photocopy *The Value Proposition* (one per participant)	20 minutes
REVIEW	• *Entrepreneur Self-Assessment* worksheet	1. Print/photocopy the *Entrepreneur Self-Assessment* worksheet for each participant	10-15 minutes

Lesson One – The Value Proposition

FOCUS: What Is an Entrepreneur?

10 minutes

Purpose:

Participants gain an overview of what the term 'entrepreneurship' means.

Materials:

- Videos about entrepreneurship
- *A Day in the Life of an Entrepreneur* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Share these statistics with the participants:

   There are 582 million entrepreneurs in the world (MARKINBLOG, 2020).

   Nearly 5.4 million new businesses were started in the U.S. in 2021 (Census, 2022).

   As of 2020, there were 274 million female entrepreneurs worldwide (GEM Consortium, 2021).

2. Ask participants what they think an entrepreneur is or does. Have them access the *A Day in the Life of an Entrepreneur* worksheet. Have participants complete the column about what they already know and what they would like to know about being an entrepreneur.

3. Play one or all of the following videos:

   What is an Entrepreneur?

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92ZmzD70sOU

   Who Even is an Entrepreneur?

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aozlwC3XwfY

   The Best Advice for Entrepreneurs

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHtmJMtMetM

   Have them complete the third column identifying what they have learned in the video clips.

A Day in the Life of an Entrepreneur

Directions: Identify what you already know about being an entrepreneur, what you want to know, and what you have learned during the lesson.

Know	Want to Know	Learned

Lesson One – The Value Proposition

LEARN: The Value Proposition

20 minutes

Purpose:

Participants will learn what a value proposition is. They will practice creating a value proposition in a concise way.

Materials:

- Access to the internet
- Paper and pen/pencil
- *The Value Proposition* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Remind participants what a value proposition is. Share this definition: A value proposition is a simple statement that summarizes why a customer would choose your product or service.

   It communicates the clearest benefit that customers receive by giving you their business. Every value proposition should speak to a customer's challenge and make the case for your company as the problem-solver.

2. Explain that as an entrepreneur a clear value proposition is key to your success. A great value proposition may highlight what makes you different from competitors, but it should always focus on how customers define your value.

   Likewise, conversations around brand strategy and taglines should stem from a value proposition, but they aren't one and the same.

3. Share this video about creating value proposition. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ky67kLp1cOM

4. Explain to participants that they are going to practice creating a value proposition. Give each participant *The Value Proposition* worksheet.

5. Have participants articulate their value proposition in a concise way. It sounds simple, but it is always challenging at first.

6. At this link are a few ideas for faux business or products as a starter if you'd like to use them. https://teens.lovetoknow.com/teens-school/fake-business-ideas-school-projects

7. Have participants share their business or product idea as well as their value proposition.

Name: ___________________________ Class: ___________________________

The Value Proposition

Step 1: Identify a product idea or a business concept in the space below. Provide a brief description of the concept or idea.

Step 2: Prepare your value proposition for the idea or concept. Remember: Keep it simple and concise. Why should a customer choose your product, service, or idea?

Lesson One – The Value Proposition

REVIEW: Self-Assessment

10-15 minutes

Purpose:

Each participant will assess their own skills to ascertain whether they would make a good entrepreneur.

Materials:

- *Entrepreneur Self-Assessment* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Give each participant the *Entrepreneur Self-Assessment* worksheet. Allow five-seven minutes to complete each question.
2. Have participants pair up and share answers to each question. They should provide feedback on whether they believe their partner would make a good entrepreneur based on their answers.

Name: ___________________________ Class: ___________________________

Entrepreneur Self-Assessment

Take this assessment to begin to think like an entrepreneur.

1. I would like to be described as:

2. A dream business venture for me would be:

3. I value being:

4. I am most comfortable when:

5. People who know me say I'm good at:

6. My weakness as a leader is:

7. I sometimes worry that:

8. My reaction to competition is:

9. I define success as:

10. The entrepreneur I most admire is:

Lesson Two – Defining the Problem

Lesson Overview

There is more than one way to define and solve a problem. Participants will learn about the adaptive versus innovative problem-solving models and gain a better understanding of how they think as an entrepreneur.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Articulate what a problem statement is and how to define a problem
- Compare and contrast the adaptive versus innovative problem-solving models
- Self-assess how they think as an entrepreneur
- Apply their problem-solving skills to identify potential problems or issues that need to be solved

Lesson at a Glance

Activity	Materials	Preparation	Approximate class time
FOCUS	• Videos about defining problems	1. Prepare to show videos	10-15 minutes
LEARN	• *What Kind of Thinker Are You?* worksheet • *Adaptive vs. Innovative – Which Am I?* worksheet	1. Print/photocopy *What Kind of Thinker Are You?* and *Adaptive vs. Innovative – Which Am I?* for each participant	15 minutes
REVIEW	• *Defining Problems Exercise* worksheet	1. Print/photocopy the *Defining Problems Exercise* worksheet for each participant	10-15 minutes

Lesson Two – Defining the Problem

FOCUS: What is a Problem Statement?

10-15 minutes

Purpose:

Participants gain an overview of what a problem statement is and how to define a problem.

Materials:

- Videos about defining problems

Facilitation Steps:

1. Share a short video with participants about what a problem statement is and how to define a problem. Here are a few to choose from:

   How to Define a Problem Statement & Your Product's Story

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDWG4hBQ6n8

   Problem Definition

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDAcR4w4RK8

   Defining the Problem

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rJRVv-NOaA

2. Challenge each participant to identify a problem statement and a solution using a real-life example. Share this one with them:

   Problem: Going to the video store requires fighting traffic, wandering the aisles, and waiting in long lines just to get a single movie.

   Solution: Netflix allows anyone to enjoy thousands of titles streamed directly to their home or delivered to their mailbox.

3. Ask for volunteers to share a few problem statements and solutions.

Lesson Two – Defining the Problem

LEARN: Adaptive vs. Innovative Models

15 minutes

Purpose:

Participants will learn about the adaptive vs. innovative problem-solving models. They will take a self-assessment to gain a better understanding of how they think as an entrepreneur.

Materials:

- *What Kind of Thinker Are You*? worksheet
- *Adaptive vs. Innovative – Which Am I?* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Share this information: The first and more conservative approach an entrepreneur may use to solve problems is the adaptive model.

   The **adaptive model** seeks solutions for problems in ways that are tested and known to be effective. An adaptive model accepts the problem definition and is concerned with resolving problems rather than finding them.

   This approach seeks greater efficiency while aiming at continuity and stability. The second, and more creative approach, is the **innovative model** of entrepreneurial problem solving, which uses techniques that are unknown to the market and that bring advantage to an organization.

   An innovative problem-solving style challenges the problem definition, discovers problems and avenues for their solutions, and questions existing assumptions—in a nutshell, it does things differently.

   An innovative problem-solving style uses outside-the-box thinking and searches for novel solutions. Novelty is a shared trait of creative entrepreneurship, and it is why entrepreneurs gravitate toward this method of problem solving.

2. Share this video: Two Bakers Two Styles Thinking Style in Action https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJC4n0I2WMw

3. Give participants the *What Kind of Thinker Are You?* worksheet. Give them five minutes to complete it. After they added up both totals, give them the *Adaptive vs. Innovative - Which Am I?* worksheet.

4. Have them look at the graph and identify where they fall within the graph.

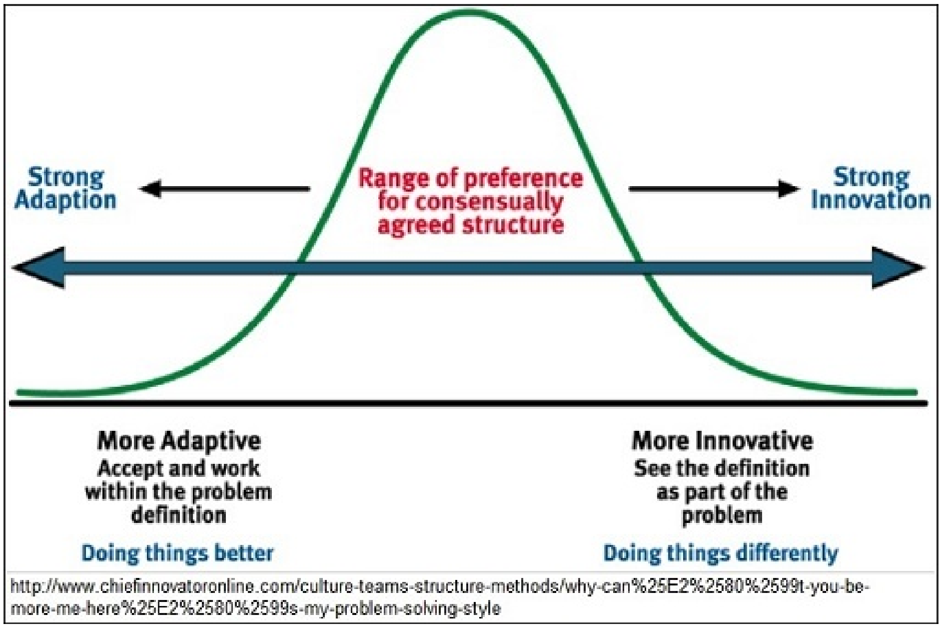
What Kind of Thinker Are You?

Check yes or no for each characteristic.

Characteristic	**Yes**	**No**
I prefer to seek solutions for problems in ways that are tested and known to be effective.		
I prefer to accept the problem definition and I would rather be concerned with resolving problems than finding them.		
I welcome change and am happy to break with the current paradigm or systems. I like to alter, break, or challenge rules and norms to solve problems.		
I tend to seek greater efficiency while aiming at continuity and stability.		
I prefer to approach problems with creativity.		
I prefer to use techniques that are unknown to the market and that bring advantage to an organization.		
I am comfortable challenging the problem definition, discovering problems myself and avenues for their solutions, and questioning existing assumptions.		
I enjoy routine and prefer work that requires precision, a methodical approach, and attention to detail.		
I prefer to use out-the-box thinking and search for novel solutions.		
I tend to produce fewer ideas, but my ideas are well thought-through, relevant, and safe for immediate use.		
I welcome change that improves the current paradigm or systems – i.e., 'doing the same things better.'		
I am very comfortable with speaking up and ready to challenge authority when necessary and appropriate.		
I am comfortable seeking consensus and look to maintain continuity and stability in groups.		
I welcome clarity of group norms and am prudent with authority.		
My ideas may be radical, possibly risky, but I accept the risk of failure for ideas – I will always have more of them.		
I prefer varied work that avoids routine and enables tangential thinking.		
I like to stick within the rules when solving problems and rarely challenge them.		
I like to look at the big picture and rarely obsess over the detail.		
Total "Yes" answers in gray boxes __________ Total "Yes" answers in white boxes __________		

Adaptive vs. Innovative – Which am I?

Here is a model based on the Adaption-Innovation Theory.



White "Yes" boxes _________ # Gray "Yes" boxes ________

If you had more white boxes than gray boxes, you are more of an innovative thinker.

If you had more gray boxes than white boxes, you are more of an adaptive thinker.

If you were evenly split, you fall more within the middle of the bell curve in the graph above.

Lesson Two – Defining the Problem

REVIEW: Defining Problems Application

10-15 minutes

Purpose:

Participants will apply their problem-solving skills through a series of pictures that include potential problems or issues that need to be solved.

Materials:

- *Defining Problems Exercise* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Give each participant the *Defining Problems Exercise.* Read through the instructions so that they understand what to do.
2. As an alternative to individual completion, you may divide the class into three groups and assign one photo on the page to each group. Assign a recorder to each group so that the answers to the questions can be captured during their group discussion.

Defining Problems Exercise

Choose one of the photos below. Define the issues that you see and what questions you would ask or additional information you would want to help define the problems. Note: Don't start with a solution – Define the problem better!

Photo #: ____

Issues in the photo:

Additional information or questions I would ask:

Brief problem statement:

Lesson Three – Applying Creative Thinking

Lesson Overview

To be a successful entrepreneur, you need to be able to apply many different approaches to thinking. This lesson will take participants through a series of different activities applying a variety of ways to think creatively as an entrepreneur.

Lesson Objectives

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Learn a new method for problem-solving and critically thinking
- Think creatively to grow investment dollars
- Help participants learn to think ‘out of the box’ and be creatively innovative for generating ideas

Lesson at a Glance

Activity	Materials	Preparation	Approximate class time
FOCUS	• Videos about reverse brainstorming • *Reverse Brainstorming Activity* worksheet	1. Prepare to show videos 2. Print/photocopy the *Reverse Brainstorming Activity*? for each participant	10-15 minutes
LEARN	• Envelopes for each group with varying amounts of fake money in them • Fake money printed, cut apart • *Group Investment Plan* worksheet	1. Print/photocopy the *Group Investment Plan* worksheet for each group 2. Print fake money and put the amount desired into envelopes for group exercise	30-40 minutes
REVIEW	• A variety of common objects to choose from • *Wacky Ideas Generation Form* • *Two-Minute Pitch* worksheet	1. Print/photocopy the *Wacky Ideas Generation Form* and *Two-Minute Pitch* worksheet for each participant or group 2. Gather common objects for group activity	25-85 minutes

Lesson Three – Applying Creative Thinking

FOCUS: Reverse Brainstorming

10-15 minutes

Purpose:

Participants will learn a new method for problem-solving and critically thinking.

Materials:

- Videos about reverse brainstorming
- *Reverse Brainstorming Activity* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Introduce the concept of Reverse Brainstorming by sharing one of the following short videos:

   Reverse Brainstorming Activity for Idea Generation

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKe75wT90ac

   How to Do Reverse Brainstorming to Generate Ideas

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5SmSoVuPRA

   Reverse Brainstorming

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMheO9PAbVg

2. Review the five basic steps to reverse brainstorming

   Step 1: Identify the problem
   Step 2: Reverse the problem that you have
   Step 3: Collect all information
   Step 4: Reverse the ideas
   Step 5: Evaluate solutions

3. Give each participant the *Reverse Brainstorming Activity* worksheet. Give them 10 minutes to complete the activity. Have participant share answers as a group afterward.

Reverse Brainstorming Activity

Directions: In the first box brainstorm many ways to answer that problem. Then in the second box, reverse and brainstorm ways to answer that issue.

How to always be late to a staff meeting

How to always be on time to a staff meeting

Lesson Three – Applying Creative Thinking

LEARN: The Envelope Exercise

30-40 minutes

Purpose:

Participants will learn how to think creatively to grow investment dollars. As an entrepreneur financial success is key.

Materials:

- Envelopes for each group with varying amounts of fake money in them
- Fake money printed, cut apart
- *Group Investment Plan* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Prior to class, print off fake money from the page provided in this lesson. Decide how much money you will put into each envelope. You can decide if you wish to vary it by group or make each group have the same amount.

2. Share the following information with participants: Financial literacy can be extremely useful to any entrepreneur. In fact, it can be crucial for founders in the early days of a business, who are still trying to establish a framework for the survival and growth of their enterprise.

   No matter the business or product idea, most entrepreneurs, particularly in the early days, are focused on attracting and retaining those all-important clients and customers.

   It's not just the sales and customer management. The entrepreneur can end up doing a lot of the work to deliver the finished product to clients too, particularly in knowledge or skills-based industries.

   In the meantime, who's balancing the books and managing the business's finances? Without knowledgeable staff or financial literacy on the part of the entrepreneur, it can be hard to do anything more than just the bare minimum in terms of financial success.

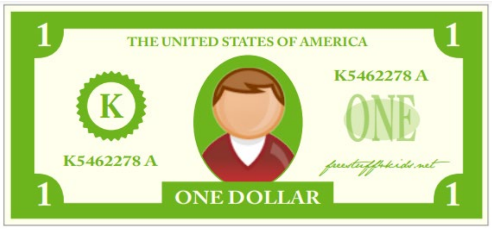
   A financially literate entrepreneur is more likely to be fully in control of their business. Successful entrepreneurs are always thinking of creative ways to increase their investment.

3. Divide the class into several small groups. Give each group the envelope and one *Group Investment Plan* worksheet.

4. Explain that the challenge for each group will be to think creatively and brainstorm how they can increase the investment or dollars they have been given.

   Allow 20-30 minutes for group brainstorming. The group should choose someone to record all the ideas for their plan.

5. Call the class back together. Have each group introduce their initial investment amount of cash and their plan for increasing this investment.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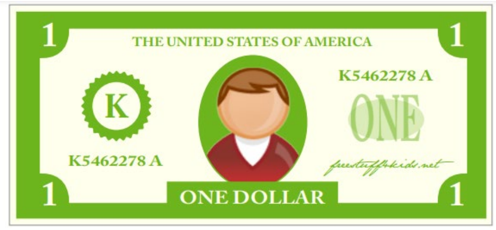
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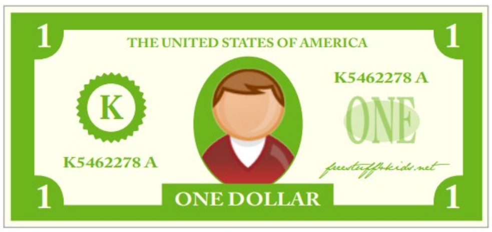
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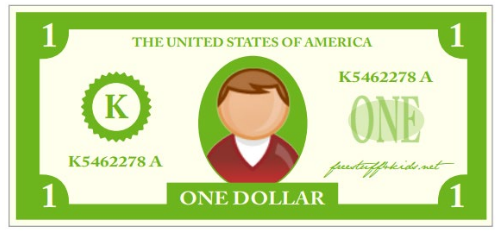
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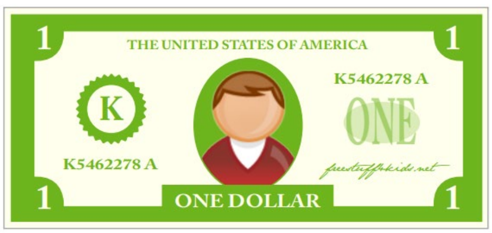
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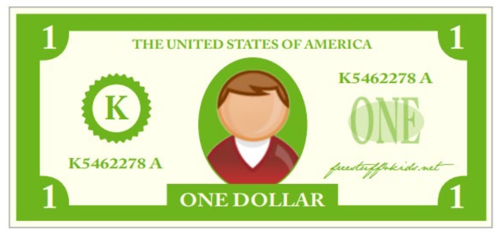
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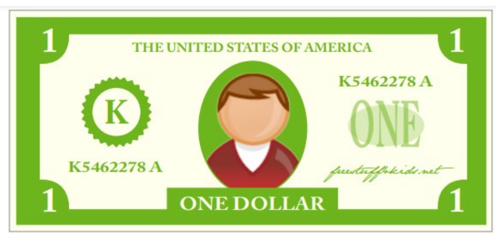
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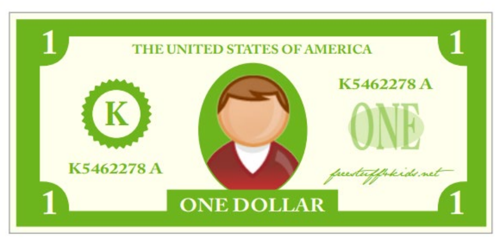
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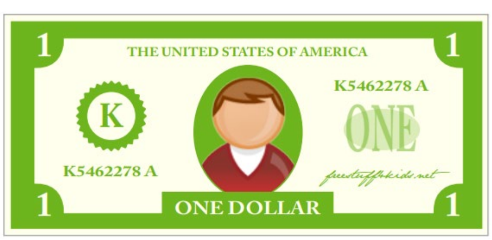
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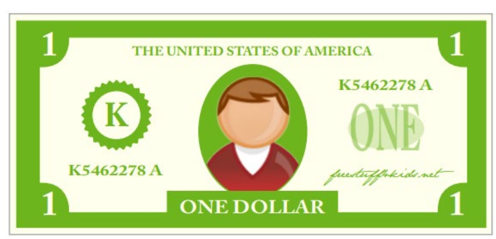
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Group Investment Plan

Group members:

Initial investment amount: $_______

Plan for increasing the investment:

Lesson Three – Applying Creative Thinking

REVIEW: Wacky Ideas and Two-Minute Pitch

25 minutes for activities and 2 minutes per participant or group for presentation time.

Purpose:

This activity will help participants learn to think 'out of the box' and be creatively innovative for generating ideas.

Materials:

- A variety of common objects to choose from
- *Wacky Ideas Generation Form*
- *Two-Minute Pitch* worksheet

Facilitation Steps:

1. Collect a wide variety of common objects to use or if you wish, gather enough of the same two items for each group or participant to have a set.

   Objects could be toothpick and cotton ball, paper clip and pen, etc.

2. Decide if you want to approach this activity as a small group, pair, or individual activity. Give each group or person a chance to choose two unrelated objects or hand out the two you have chosen.

3. Give each group/student the *Wacky Ideas Generation Form*. Allow 15 minutes for brainstorming time.

   What is it?
   What can it do?
   Who uses it?
   How could it be used differently?

4. After the brainstorming session, give each group/participant the *Two-Minute Pitch* worksheet. Participants should choose from their brainstormed ideas to choose the one they want to pitch.

5. Allow another 10 minutes for each participant/group to write the outline in the space provided.

   Introduce yourself and the name of your company
   New or product service or idea
   Explain how it works
   Explain why you need it in your life

6. Give each participant or group two minutes to pitch their idea.

Wacky Ideas Generation Form

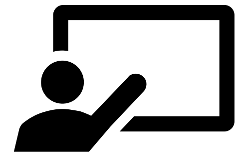
Object #1: ________________________________

Object #2: ________________________________

Use the following questions to generate ideas as they combine the two objects into our one idea.

- What is it?
- What can it do?
- Who uses it?
- How could it be used differently?

Two-Minute Pitch



Directions: Prepare to do a two-minute pitch for your new idea. Use the space below to outline your pitch.

1. Introduction: Information about yourself and the name of your company or idea

2. New product/service/or idea

3. How does it work?

4. Why do you need it in your life?