

State University of New York College at Buffalo - Buffalo State College

Digital Commons at Buffalo State

Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's
Projects

International Center for Studies in Creativity

5-2021

Developing a Creativity Curriculum Intensive for Small Business- Owners

Rachel C. Voelke-Kuhlmann

State University of New York College at Buffalo - Buffalo State College, rachel.voelke@gmail.com

Advisor

Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers

First Reader

Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers

To learn more about the Center for Studies in Creativity and its educational programs, research, and resources, go to <https://suny.buffalostate.edu/programs/creative-studies>.

Recommended Citation

Voelke-Kuhlmann, Rachel C., "Developing a Creativity Curriculum Intensive for Small Business-Owners" (2021). *Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects*. 323.
<https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/323>

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects>

Developing a Creativity Curriculum Intensive for Small Business-Owners
by

Rachel Voelkle-Kuhlmann

An Abstract of a Project in
Creativity and Change Leadership

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2021

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

Developing a Creativity Curriculum Intensive for Small Business-Owners

This project involved both the development and implementation of the *Dare to Create Launchpad* creativity curriculum intensive for an intimate group of small business-owners. The purpose of this project was to receive feedback from participants to determine if it would be a successful and viable way to engage small business-owners in the Creative Problem-Solving process. In addition, this curriculum aimed to provide a platform for building community and making space for participants to become creatively energetic in the way they perceive future goal/wish/challenges. The development and implementation of this curriculum and the positive feedback from group members confirmed that this program can be a valuable offering for small businesses to experience.

Keywords: creative problem-solving, small business-owners, program development, creativity, virtual facilitation



Signature

5/4/21

Date

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

Developing a Creativity Curriculum Intensive for Small Business-Owners

A Project in
Creative Studies
by

Rachel Voelkle-Kuhlmann

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science

May 2021

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

Developing a Creativity Curriculum Intensive for Small Business-Owners

A Project in
Creative Studies
by

Rachel Voelke-Kuhlmann

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science
May 2021

Dates of Approval:

5/4/21



Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Associate Professor
International Center for Studies in Creativity

5/4/21



Rachel Voelke-Kuhlmann
Student

Copyright Notice, Copyright © 2020 by Rachel C. Voelke-Kuhlmann, All rights reserved. The works of authorship contained in this paper, including but not limited to all text and images, are owned, except as otherwise expressly stated, by Rachel C. Voelke-Kuhlmann, and may not be copied, reproduced, transmitted, displayed, distributed, rented, sublicensed, altered, stored for subsequent use, or otherwise used in whole or in part in any manner without the prior written consent of Rachel C. Voelke-Kuhlmann, except to the extent that such use constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S.C. §107), with an attached copy of this page containing the Copyright Notice.

Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude extends to everyone in the ICSC program, which has forever changed my life for the better. I would especially like to thank my advisor, Dr. Gerard Puccio and the supervisor of this project, Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers. Thanks to Dr. Selcuk Ajar, Dr. John Cabra, Dr. Roger Firestien, Erica Swiatek and Shari Rife for your brilliance and contagious passion for creativity. Special thanks to Dr. David Yates for taking the time to share his virtual facilitation knowledge and materials.

I am sincerely grateful for all of my talented peers and colleagues in this program. I want to especially thank Tanya Knudsen for her help in developing my Mural board templates and for assisting me in my program preparations and practice facilitations. Thanks also to Nicole Jones and Keira Grant for your feedback along the way and to William Fogarty for leading such a wonderful meditation on creativity!

To the seven amazing individuals who joined the *Dare to Create Launchpad* beta cohort- I will always be grateful that you took the leap to join a group of strangers and open yourselves to learning more about creativity and yourselves. It was a great honor to learn and grow alongside each of you during the nine weeks we spent together for this project and you have played such a crucial role in laying the foundation for future participants. Thank you!

Thank you to my friends and family and work colleagues for all of their support over the last two years. They say it takes a village to raise a child, but it takes a village to get through graduate school (and raise a child) and I am beyond grateful for your encouragement. Special thanks to my wonderful parents and relatives who helped to watch our daughter during this program and provided so much support. Thanks also to Jen Halper for your edits and your inspirational spirit.

Thank you to my incredible husband, Ryan, for his unwavering support and encouragement throughout this program. I could not have done this without you and could not be more grateful to have you at my side during this journey.

And to my daughter, Leia, I am so thankful to have had you as part of this journey. You have forever grounded me in my fight to make the world a better place through creativity.

Table of Contents

Abstract Title Page.....	i
Abstract of the Project.....	ii
Title Page.....	iii
Signatory Page.....	iv
Copyright Page.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Tables and Figures.....	ix
Section One: Background to the Project.....	1
Section Two: Pertinent Literature.....	4
Section Three: Process Plan.....	9
Section Four: Outcomes.....	18
Section Five: Key Learnings.....	30
Section Six: Conclusion.....	34
References.....	35
Appendix A – Recruitment Document.....	38
Appendix B – Onboarding Email Template.....	41
Appendix C – Pre-course Feedback Form	43
Appendix D – Bio Profile.....	45
Appendix E – Course Tracker	46
Appendix F – Comment Box.....	47

Appendix G – Client Facilitation Feedback Form48

Appendix H – Creative Problem-Solving 101 PowerPoint.....50

Appendix I –Mural Board Templates.....53

Digital Commons Online Permission.....59

List of Figures

Figure 1. Pre-course Feedback Regarding the Creative Problem-Solving Process.....	27
Figure 2. Post-course Feedback Regarding the Creative Problem-Solving Process.....	27

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Purpose and Description of Project

In order to build equity, scale effort, and support small businesses owned by individuals identifying as women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+) that have been disproportionately impacted by the effects of COVID-19, I will be preparing, presenting, facilitating, and evaluating a nine-week virtual intensive curriculum to teach creativity and an overview of the Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) process, modeled after the Creative Change Model (Puccio, Mance & Murdock, 2011) to seven volunteer small business-owners. I developed this curriculum, called the *Dare to Create Launchpad* as part of an independent study in late summer 2020 and it is intended to teach concepts around creativity, introduce new tools and ways of thinking, and ideally develop the affective skill of courage to generate creative confidence. Ultimately, this short course provides a framework and common language to participants for the process of creative problem-solving which they are already using as a business owner, likely without knowing it.

Learning about creativity and applying the CPS process to each participants' business in the form of a CPS facilitation is intended to provide the participant with creative confidence and ideally, solutions to their goals/wishes/challenges that they may be encountering in their business. Participating in this virtual short program, which takes place weekly in the evenings, is intended to be a unique experience that provides community and tangible educational takeaways that the participant can use to strengthen their business.

The goals for this project include:

- Develop an effective creativity curriculum (*Dare to Create Launchpad*) that is geared for small business owners that identify as being women, BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ owned.

- Collect anonymous feedback to evaluate the curriculum that will be used to develop the curriculum for future implementation.
- Grow, develop skills and rate my own effectiveness as a Creative Problem-Solving (Puccio, Mance & Murdock, 2011) and FourSight® (<https://foursightonline.com/>) leader, teacher, presenter and facilitator.
- Learn about specific needs and gaps in learning, practicing and holding small businesses accountable in their respective creative learning journeys.

Rationale for Selection

I chose to develop my skill of teaching and facilitation in order to prepare myself for what I hope to be a career in CPS facilitation, especially for small businesses and non-profit organizations through my own small business, Joybrick. It is my hope that providing a community of learning and by practicing entrepreneurial leadership I am able to inspire others to grow in their creativity and solve the challenging issues of our time through their small businesses. Testing this curriculum is a way for me to determine if this is a viable business idea offering in terms of effectiveness and identify if the program is scalable and helpful to small business-owners. In addition, this project will help to identify gaps in my abilities as a facilitator and help me to continue my practice in teaching CPS.

My passion and motivation for this project derives from my desire to become a small business-owner myself. I believe that small businesses are the backbone of our country and economy and can provide the independence, flexibility and economic empowerment for individuals and their families. However, businesses owned by individuals identifying as women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ deserve a level playing field. By equipping these individuals with creativity training and the tools for CPS, I believe that these small business-owners can power

their entrepreneurial journeys that transcends habit and rigid thinking. Clarifying, generating, evaluating and implementing ideas which are considered creative in being novel and useful (Stein, 1953) can assist these businesses in surviving climates like COVID-19 and hopefully, to even thrive. Teaching creativity through this specific curriculum and community setting can strengthen these businesses while celebrating diversity and embracing empathy, which to me, are the cornerstones of creativity and humanity.

SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE

Introduction

The following summary of literature is an overview of work that I have used to inform the curriculum I created for small business-owners. In addition to a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of creativity training, these articles and books explore some of the more affective facets of creativity and aspects of their conclusions are incorporated into the curriculum mostly in the form of extended learning opportunities. I was interested in learning about these techniques and ideas as I believe that some small business-owners who are new to learning about the formal framework of creativity may be interested and appreciate tangible techniques to overcome any fears they may have regarding flexing their creative muscle.

Affective Facets of Creativity

Kelley, T., Kelley, D. (2013). *Creative confidence: Unleashing the creative potential within us all*. Crown Business.

This work by the Kelley brothers from IDEO explores some of the barriers that get in the way of an individual trying to think creatively. Using a blend of examples from IDEO and masterful storytelling, the Kelley brothers walk the reader through tangible exercises for building creative confidence. These include building a work environment that fosters creativity, building empathy with customers and utilizing intentional language to build creative confidence. Each chapter contains several tools that will help the reader to take the lessons learned in the book and apply it to their own lives.

Mehmood, M. S., Jian, Z., & Akram, U. (2020). Be so creative they can't ignore you! How can entrepreneurial leader enhance the employee creativity? *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 38, 100721. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100721

This article from researchers in China discussed how entrepreneurial leadership can actually predict creativity in the workplace using social learning theory as a framework for the study. They found that entrepreneurial leaders tend to be visionary and risk-taking in nature, and that these attributes help the individuals they are leading to feel comfortable sharing their knowledge and trusting in the risk of being creative. This is especially true for individuals who have strong learning goal orientations in that failing allows an individual to learn from their mistakes and having an environment that encourages discussion and follow-up assists with growing creativity. These individuals see challenges as opportunities and are internally motivated to seek exciting new solutions.

Sawyer, R. (2019). The role of failure in learning how to create in art and design. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 33, 100527. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2018.08.002

This ethnographic research article analyzed the role of failure in learning and teaching creativity, especially in the field of art and design. Six themes emerged which featured failure (especially the term “productive failure”) as an essential part of the creative process, especially when intentionally expected in learning outcomes. This article also explored the importance of project-based and open-ended learning pedagogy as an exceptionally effective model for teaching creativity and creative thinking. The article outlines effective teaching methods such as providing ambiguous instruction and waiting for a student to reach an impasse in their learning journey before intervening in their learning.

Puccio, G., Mance, M., & Murdock, M. (2011). *Creative leadership : skills that drive change* (2edition. ed.). SAGE.

While this work explores the many facets of creative leadership, it especially highlights the Thinking Skills Model for Creative Problem-Solving process and considers the affective

skills, or emotions and feelings, that an individual requires to prepare for the cognitive needs of each particular CPS step. The three overarching affective skills that exist throughout the Thinking Skills Model are Openness to Novelty, Tolerance for Complexity, and Tolerance for Ambiguity (p. 64). Another important note from this work is that the Thinking Skills Model is not linear and an individual can enter the model at any point along their problem-solving journey based on the diagnosis of their issue.

Creativity Training

Puccio, G. J., Firestien, R. L., Coyle, C., & Masucci, C. (2006, February 15). *A Review of the Effectiveness of CPS Training: A Focus on Workplace Issues*. Wiley Online Library. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8691.2006.00366.x>.

This paper directly examined the impact of teaching the Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) model in organizational settings through a literature review. The review especially studied the positive changing attitudes, changing behavior, and impact on groups in workplace settings. It also noted the efficacy of the CPS method by reviewing effective real-world applications of CPS at workplaces such as manufacturing and forge plants, a hospital and media company, which in turn reflects the ability of CPS to be applied to a variety of industries. While more studies need to be conducted to determine the effectiveness of other creativity models and how CPS has been effectively applied at their organizations, the overall review determined that CPS is one of the most impactful frameworks of creativity training.

Scott, G., Leritz, L. E., & Mumford, M. D. (2004). The effectiveness of creativity training: A quantitative review. *Creativity Research Journal*, 16(4), 361-388.

doi:10.1207/s15326934crj1604_1

This comprehensive and quantitative meta-analysis of creativity training of 70 prior studies examined the effectiveness and patterns of success of these trainings. They found that trainings focused on real-world applications tended to have better outcomes in fostering creative performance in their participants. In addition, trainings should ground themselves in cognitive skill building and provide participants with a variety of tools and exercises based in order to practice creative thinking. Of note, one of the biggest leaps in learning comes from teaching about problem identification as the first step in the creative problem-solving process.

Summary

In summary, these articles not only explore the importance of creative training but the various techniques in which to engage and equip students to lean into their own confidence and courage in order to create. I look forward to utilizing my learnings from these articles, such as project-based learning and implementing activities such as meditation and a failure resume in this curriculum. More importantly, I hope that the feedback from participants show that these carefully crafted and intentional activities make a positive difference in their experience with the curriculum.

In addition to the above-mentioned articles, I was also influenced by the following works which have informed my foundational knowledge of the Creative Problem-Solving process and facilitation skills:

Brown, B. (2015). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*: Penguin.

Cameron, J. (2021). Morning pages. Retrieved March 23, 2021, from

<https://juliacameronlive.com/basic-tools/morning-pages/>

- Firestien, R. L. (2020). *Create in a Flash: A Leader's Recipe for Breakthrough Innovation*. Green Tractor Publishing.
- Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011). *Creativity unbound: An introduction to creative process, 5th edition*. FourSight, LLC.
- Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011). *Facilitation: a door to creative leadership, 4th edition*. FourSight, LLC.
- Osborn, A. (1953). *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem-solving*. Creative Education Foundation.
- Parnes, S.J. & Noller, R.B. (1972). Applied creativity: the creative studies project: Part I – The Development. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 6(1), 11-22.
- Parnes, S.J. & Noller, R.B. (1972). Applied creativity: the creative studies project: Part II – Results of the two year program . *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 6(3), 164-186.
- Parnes, S. J. (1988). *Visionizing*. Creative Education Foundation Press.
- Puccio, G. J., Mance, M., Switalski, L. B., & Reali, P. D. (2012). *Creativity rising: Creative thinking and creative problem solving in the 21st century*. ICSC Press.

SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

Plan to Achieve Goals and Outcomes

The Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) process will serve as the backbone and main framework for this curriculum, which meets on Zoom for two hours each week (except the last week which will extend by a half hour for wrap-up). I will act as the main developer of this curriculum and will be teaching and facilitating the group of seven participants each week.

This curriculum is unique in that it works exclusively with and is targeted for a set community of diverse small business-owners. In being a set and closed group, both clients and resource group members are built into the facilitations. Through this, participants can build their creative muscle through repeated exposure to the CPS process through the self-awareness of the FourSight assessment and by participating as both a client and resource group member in a project-based learning environment. In addition, having a closed and set group of diverse participants assists with building a safe environment for learning, failing, and growing in creativity training.

The first week of the curriculum, participants will learn a brief overview of creativity and the CPS process. This includes learning about a brief history of the field of creativity, understanding the importance of creativity, how habits can become the barrier to creative thinking and how creativity relates to everyone utilizing the 4C model of creativity (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). It will also provide an overview of the CPS model and the various tools that are available in each stage of the creative problem-solving process.

The second week of the curriculum, participants will take the FourSight assessment and experience a group debrief to review their results. This will help guide the discussion around the

CPS process, allow for cognitive context and self-awareness and provide a greater understanding of group dynamics for participants as we move through CPS tools in the subsequent weeks.

In weeks three through nine, each participant will have the opportunity to act as a client in a facilitation dedicated to their small business and a creative goal/wish/challenge they would like to solve. On the week in which the participant is the client, they will meet with me for an hour to review their goal/wish/challenge and provide some background information as context for the group. These facilitations will take place using Mural as a collaboration tool. The data from these sessions will be open only to the participants of the group and the data will be processed and turned into each participant client after their individual session.

During alternative weeks in which they are not the client, participants will act as resource group members to other participants. Ideally, a variety of creative problem-solving tools will be used throughout the seven weeks to demonstrate the range of tools available across the four stages of the CPS process. Not only does this model of acting as a client and resource group member help each participant to solve a challenge, but ideally, allows repeated exposure to CPS by way of project-based learning while building a small community of other small business-owners along the way.

Each week, an “extend the learning” opportunity will be offered as an optional activity for participants to deepen their learnings, as influenced by the Torrance Incubation Model of Creative Teaching and Learning (Torrance & Safter, 1990). These extended learnings are mostly targeted at the affective skills required for creativity, namely the courage and confidence to create. In addition, the external platform of Slack will be offered to provide a confidential and safe place of (virtual) connection and the opportunity to ask questions or build on ideas.

The result of this project is to create a viable curriculum for small business-owners to utilize in order to learn about creativity, the CPS process, and their own personal growth. The project is intended to collect anonymous feedback to be used to evaluate this curriculum on educating participants for future use but also in learning about my own abilities as a teacher and facilitator.

Project Timeline

Leading up to the Master's Project:

- During an independent study in late summer of 2020 I developed a framework for the *Dare to Create Launchpad* as a future offering and business model for my new creativity facilitation business, Joybrick.
- In the fall semester of 2020, I took an online course and became certified as a FourSight Mindset Facilitator which grants me the ability to conduct individual and group FourSight debriefs for individuals who take the assessment.

Prior to Program Implementation:

- Have each participant complete a general biographical inventory that captures information like their business, what they are hoping to achieve in the program and any other pertinent information for the program that can be shared with other participants to prepare everyone for our time together.
- Send out anonymous feedback form (Likert-scale) to all participants gauging baseline knowledge of CPS, Slack and Mural as well as attitudes toward creativity and space for concerns and questions. In addition, this will collect any goals or intentions the participant has for the curriculum.

- Send each participant a “goodie” package which contained a hardcopy of the FourSight Thinking Profile Interpretive Guide, a blank notebook for notes (or even as an idea journal) as well as fun items to promote play and set expectations including pipe cleaners, model wax, tea and chocolate.

During the Program:

- Distribute a short feedback form for participant to complete after their individualized facilitation as part of the curriculum evaluation.
- Follow-up Slack messaging will go out the same night as the meeting and a recap email will go out a few days after each session meeting summarizing that week’s experience and reminding participants of the extended learning opportunity.

Dare to Create Launchpad Beta Course Curriculum:

- Week 1(Week of February 15)
 - Introductions/Icebreakers
 - Ground rules/Housekeeping/Zoom etiquette
 - Mission and vision
 - Creativity 101
 - Overview of history
 - 4C Model of Creativity
 - Overcoming Habits
 - The CPS Model
 - Overview of the CPS Tools
 - Closing activity: ideation around takeaways and ideas for future use of CPS, including a goal/challenge/wish for their individual facilitation

- Course Overview
- Q + A
- *Extend the learning opportunity: FourSight Assessment*

- Week 2 (Week of February 22)
 - FourSight Group Debrief
 - Overview of Mural
 - Practice session on Mural “playground”
 - *Extend the learning opportunity: Practice on a Mural “obstacle course”*

- Week 3 (Week of March 1)
 - Meet with Participant A (completed week prior)
 - Participant A Facilitation
 - Debrief
 - *Extend the learning opportunity: Idea journal*

- Week 4 (Week of March 8)
 - Meet with Participant B (completed week prior)
 - Participant B Facilitation
 - Debrief
 - *Extend the learning opportunity: Morning pages*

- Week 5 (Week of March 15)

- Meet with Participant C (completed week prior)
- Participant C Facilitation
- Debrief
- *Extend the learning opportunity: Failure resume*

- Week 6 (Week of March 22)
 - Meet with Participant D (completed week prior)
 - Participant D Facilitation
 - Debrief
 - *Extend the learning opportunity: Meditation for creativity*

- Week 7 (Week of March 29)
 - Meet with Participant E (completed week prior)
 - Participant E Facilitation
 - Debrief
 - *Extend the learning opportunity: Creativity independent study*

- Week 8 (Week of April 5)
 - Meet with Participant F (completed week prior)
 - Client F Facilitation
 - Debrief
 - *Extend the learning opportunity: Prepare takeaways, review extended learning opportunity activity results/outcomes*

- Week 9 (Week of April 12 – *2.5 hour session)
 - Meet with Participant G (completed week prior)
 - Participant G Facilitation
 - Debrief
 - Celebration and closure
 - Provide time for participants to write letters to self with prompt
 - Share main takeaways and lessons
 - Leave time to complete closing feedback form

Evaluation Plan

The specific focus of this Master’s Project is to evaluate the strength of this creativity curriculum based on anonymous feedback and trainer observations. I will be successful with this project if I am able to measurably see a quantitative difference in the anonymous feedback forms before and after the curriculum, namely, an increase in creative knowledge associated with the curriculum. In addition, the feedback will help to answer if the curriculum was helpful to participants in achieving their goals.

Specific to my learning goals, I will evaluate my curriculum through the following measures:

- *Develop an effective creativity curriculum that is geared for small business owners that identify as being women, BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ owned.*
 - Successfully run the full nine-week course of the curriculum, ideally with all seven participants being able to join every week of the program.
- *Collect anonymous feedback to evaluate the curriculum that will be used to develop the program for future implementation.*

- Distribute an anonymous follow-up survey about the curriculum gauging baseline knowledge of CPS, Slack and Mural as well as attitudes toward creativity and questions and concerns.
- Provide anonymous “comment box” for participants to add feedback throughout the session, providing space for ongoing feedback and development.
- *Grow, develop skills and rate my own effectiveness as a CPS (and FourSight) leader, teacher, presenter and facilitator.*
 - During the week a participant is a client, have the participant complete a feedback form after the session to get a sense of how well their goal/wish/challenge was solved and for feedback on my facilitation skills. All information collected from the participant will be written up as a collective without any identifying information. In addition, I will conduct a personal critical analysis identifying areas of growth each week.
- *Learn about specific needs and gaps in learning, practicing and holding small businesses accountable in their respective creative learning journeys.*
 - With feedback, create a set of edits for the curriculum to be implemented in the future. I will include feedback questions specific to addressing the needs of the small business owners.
 - Qualitatively, it is my hope that program participants express that they were able to solve their individual goal/wish/challenge and that they would recommend this program to another small business owner.

The design of this overall program is to build equity for underrepresented small business-owners in an intimate learning environment. It provides a training that may not be readily

accessible to these individuals or even a topic that is initially accepted as critically important to business. Providing a small network of business-owners a chance to experience the same learning journey will ideally help with accountability, developing curiosity and overall growth.

While the ideas and solutions reached during the program may not be implemented immediately by program participants until after the Master's Project is complete, I am hopeful that they eventually are brought into fruition and that their businesses are able to experience a positive result from their solution. Although the program will naturally come to a stop after the conclusion of the ninth week program, I will encourage the small group to stay in touch and continue to use each other as resources in the future.

Finally, at the heart of this project are the key learnings that will be achieved through feedback and internal reflection. The feedback and lessons I learn from conducting this curriculum will be implemented into my future work as a facilitator and into the next iteration of this curriculum as well.

SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

The following section reviews the main outcomes of developing and implementing the *Dare to Create Launchpad*. These outcomes specifically include the development of curriculum materials, outlines changes to the program during implementation, and highlights the feedback results from participants.

Curriculum Materials

One of the main outcomes of my project was the formation of the *Dare to Create Launchpad* curriculum materials. While I had developed the basic framework for the curriculum for my Independent Study in late summer 2020, implementing the actual program required the development of a wide assortment of important materials.

Onboarding

One of the first documents I created after receiving departmental review for the project was a three-page recruitment document (Appendix A) that provided an overview of the program and detailed the target audience, program structure, schedule, and my contact information for joining. I was able to share this document to my social media pages and share via email with friends and family and within two weeks, successfully recruited all seven members of my beta cohort.

Once members were recruited, they received a welcome email (Appendix B) which reminded participants of the schedule and the course materials required (a computer with a keyboard). In addition, the email contained a few onboarding items including the Pre-course Feedback form (Appendix C), joining our private Slack channel which provided an outlet for connecting outside our Monday night sessions, and a Bio Profile (Appendix D) which was shared with participants in order to build anticipation and start the process of team-building before our first session. In

addition to these materials, I provided a course tracker (Appendix E) which was a Google Sheet that showed specific deadlines and calls to action for participants and was updated each week.

In addition to this call to action, I mailed out a package to each participant containing a physical copy of the FourSight Thinking Profile Interpretive Guide, an In and Out Thinking notes page (Miller et al., 2011), a personalized notebook, and fun items to encourage play, like pipe cleaners, sculpted wax, chocolate and tea.

Feedback Forms

As previously mentioned, a pre-course feedback form was sent out prior to our first meeting. This feedback form (created on Google forms) was a way to take a temperature read from the group and understand their general preconceived feedback regarding creativity and this program.

I wanted a way to collect anonymous feedback throughout the nine weeks that was separate than my pre, post, and facilitation feedback forms. I created a *Dare to Create Launchpad* comment box (Appendix F) on Google forms which allowed participants to add feedback throughout our sessions together.

As a facilitator, I wanted a way to capture my abilities and practice according to each individual participant and their experience with the process as a client and owner of the goal/wish/challenge they were seeking to solve. I therefore created a Client Facilitation Feedback form (Appendix G) that was sent to the participant the night of their facilitation so they could provide specific feedback.

Program Materials

During the first session, I randomly drew names to assign participants to a specific week in the facilitation schedule (weeks 3-9). In order to streamline the scheduling process for one on one sessions with the designated client, I utilized a program called Calendly which allowed

participants to view the dates and times I was available to meet and automatically set up a Zoom invite.

The first week of the program, I developed a Creative Problem-Solving 101 PowerPoint (Appendix H) which I adapted from a presentation I developed in a previous course in my Master's program (CRS 670: Foundations in Teaching and Training Creativity). This presentation served as an overview of the Creative Problem-Solving process but was also an opportunity to make introductions, set expectations, and build a creative climate among the group members.

After each week, I would send out a recap email to participants a few days after that included a review of what we did that particular week, a summary of the goal/wish/challenge we were working on, and reminders for upcoming weeks, including the Extended Learning Opportunity.

Most important, thanks to the help of my classmate Tanya Knudsen, I created a set of Mural templates (Appendix I) that are specific to each step of the Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) process. Each separate board represents a specific step in the CPS process (including clarify, ideate, develop and implement) and contains specific tools and prompts for each respective step. The top of each board contains a standard "dashboard" of resources for participants including the divergent and convergent thinking guidelines, information on highlighting and marking hits, our group FourSight profile, and links to external resources. The boards were specifically based around the teachings and prompts from Dr. Roger Firestien's *Create in a Flash* online course, which provides a set of short video tutorials and helpful PDFs to help individuals through the CPS process (Firestien, 2021). I used these documents not only to inform the Mural boards, but to share with participants as a way to prepare for our one-on-one sessions together to prepare for our facilitation as well as after to help with implementation.

In addition to Mural board templates for the four steps in the CPS process, I also customized a Mural “obstacle course” (Appendix I) which was a way for participants to practice using the Mural platform. This included a range of icebreaker questions intended to provide a space for individuals to get to know one another, heighten anticipation, and was offered as one of the first optional Extended Learning Opportunities.

Finally, I always began our facilitation weeks in a Mural “playground” template that I built . This template included an agenda created on Mural that allowed me to share the evening’s activities, review divergent and convergent guidelines, and provide an overview of the client’s goal/wish/challenge, vision, and background. Before we would begin our facilitation, we would always begin with a warmup that was usually related to the topic of the evening.

Curriculum Development During Implementation

During the Dare to Create Launchpad program I created some additional changes and opportunities for growth with the group. The following section reviews these changes and examines how the program concluded during a closing ceremony.

Adjustments During Dare to Create Launchpad

After the first week, a comment of a participant informed me that saying the ideas out loud while individuals were typing was distracting and overwhelming for the ideation process, so the ideas formed during our facilitations together were more a Brainwriting exercise than Stick ‘Em Up Brainstorm style. I pivoted to occasionally read out some main or repeated ideas I would see, but overall, I would have light instrumental music playing in the background for participants as they would ideate. After the seven weeks, the group created 1566 ideas in total from all of our sessions, not including our warmup sessions.

Another adjustment I made to the program was to offer an additional hour of one on one time with participants to serve as a debrief after their facilitation. I offered this as I realized after the first two facilitations that we were running out of time after the approximate 90 minutes to fully get to the development and implementation steps of their facilitation. At first, I thought this would be something participants could complete on their own by providing some resources and overview of the tools, but I realized that the whole reason I created this program was to incorporate built-in accountability for these small business-owners.

Closing Ceremony

During the last half hour of the entire *Dare to Create Launchpad* program, I spent some time sharing my takeaways with the group and invited each participant to create a personal, creativity manifesto. This included prompts around identifying what their core values are, both personally and professionally, and including their takeaways and how they want to focus their life and business after experiencing this program. I included a stamped envelope addressed to myself in their welcome kit and instructed participants to send me their manifesto and that I would return it to them in the future (and not look at the content of the personal note) in order to develop an internal form of accountability. I realized after the feedback form was sent out that I did not include an opportunity to provide feedback on this particular activity, though some group members mentioned in the post-course feedback forms how they wanted to see more time spent on exploring the implementation phase for their goal/wish/challenge further during this time at the end of the program.

Feedback Results

In addition to developing the curriculum, the heart of this Master's project was to collect feedback from participants of the *Dare to Create Launchpad* in order to evaluate the program for

future implementation, rate my own effectiveness as a creative leader, and learn about the needs of small business-owners in their creative learning journeys. Several points during the *Dare to Create Launchpad* yielded opportunities to collect this feedback including a pre-course feedback form, a comment box (which I only received one encouraging comment for), post-facilitation feedback form, and post-course feedback form. Throughout the program, I also kept a log of my own learning journey in order to look inward and evaluate my performance as a creative leader. These outcomes are listed in the key learnings section of this paper.

Pre-course Feedback

As previously mentioned, a pre-course feedback form was sent out prior to our first meeting in order to gauge the group participants and create a baseline of knowledge around creativity. Overall, the group ranked themselves as knowing very little about the Creative Problem-Solving process, but they were excited to learn more. A few participants have careers in what are considered more creative fields, so several individuals acknowledged their curiosity in what this course would cover and how the framework would relate to their current work. In addition, most participants had a beginner's knowledge of the Slack or Mural applications which was helpful for me to understand and therefore create an appropriate onboarding process for these platforms based on the group's responses.

The responses for what the group was most excited about for the course mostly focused on the aspect of community and connecting to other small business-owners. In addition, many cited their excitement for exploring creativity and innovation as well as being held accountable to implement the resulting ideas from the course.

Interestingly, there was a wide range of responses based on the apprehensions around the program. Several individuals noted the difficulty of committing to the nine-week program and

their concerns around time management. Although the recruitment materials included that even those with a business idea were welcome to join the group, a few participants noted their fears around being considered “under-qualified” to be in the group. Of note, one individual mentioned the challenge of “breaking through the fear to actually take steps toward my goal.” As we moved through the CPS process during facilitations, the fear of breaking through to implementation continued to arise as a theme for several participants. Finally, one participant was concerned how to “process other people’s creativity” which helped reemphasize the importance of setting a safe climate for creativity and taking risks with each other.

Facilitation Feedback

During the program and after each facilitation, I would share a facilitation feedback form with the client from that week. The purpose of this form was to get specific feedback based on my performance as a facilitator and creative leader.

One of the first questions posed was about the one-on-one time I spent with clients in order to refine their goal/wish/challenge and collect background information for the group. All seven participants ranked my skills highly as a consultant in this more private phase of the CPS process and the comments mentioned that they found a lot of value during this particular time.

Of the seven participants in the *Dare to Create Launchpad*, five ranked their experience as a 5 out of 5, one participant ranked a 4 out of 5 and one other participant ranked it a 3 out of 5. Some of the comments about what participants liked best about the process included the building of community and multitude of ideas from a wide variety of perspectives. One participant mentioned that going through the CPS process allowed them to see the actual feasibility of turning their idea into action and being able to recognize and call out the barriers to getting started. Another participant mentioned how they enjoyed the anonymity that the brainwriting

aspect of Mural provided which allowed for a safe space to ideate without feeling judged, especially around a group of other business-owners they had not yet met or developed a rapport with. They also included that the CPS process is, “led by a single person which eliminates the pressures of leading it ourselves or owning any kind of responsibility for how we might derail or confuse our cohort with our creative ideas”.

The feedback for facilitation improvement yielded results as diverse as the cohort participants themselves. One participant noted that with practice comes more progress and another mentioned their desire to hold an in-person facilitation instead of using a virtual format. Another participant noted their desire to have more time to work on the implementation phase which was feedback I used to add on the additional debrief hour for participants after their facilitation. One individual noted my tendency as a facilitator to apologize and make self-deprecating remarks during the presentation if I made a mistake. While I was aware this is a poor habit I have as a presenter, to hear from a participant that I could lead with confidence through mistakes (especially as a woman) as a way of improving their own experience with the process better helped me to better reflect the pressing need to change and build my confidence as a leader and presenter.

A striking point of clarity came from one participant who noted that an area of improvement is really understanding and guiding a client through what is actually achievable through the creative problem-solving process. Specifically, having a firm sense of a creative challenge, knowing what is actually achievable through the CPS process and how to properly pose challenges in a way that makes sense to the resource group for ideation and centers the need of the client. They also reflected their need for more time when converging, which is a practice that I recognize needs to be more fully developed.

One surprising outcome was that seven of the eight participants found the CPS facilitation helped them to solve their goal/wish/challenge and one found it slightly helpful. I was impressed that these were the results and was grateful for the positive feedback from the group.

Finally, a particularly interesting comment from a participant mentioned that although they appreciated the positive affirmative nature of the CPS process, they had hoped there would be more “tough love” for businesses. Specifically, that participants would have the space and confidence to plainly speak with their colleagues about aspects of their business that they think might need to be reexamined (such as pricing, branding, etc). The CPS process does indeed lean more positive as it allows room for overcoming obstacles and thinking through the action steps to make something novel and useful actually happen. This speaks to the importance of dynamic balance and making sure that the group feels the freedom to check objectives, one of the cornerstone convergent thinking guidelines.

Post-course Feedback

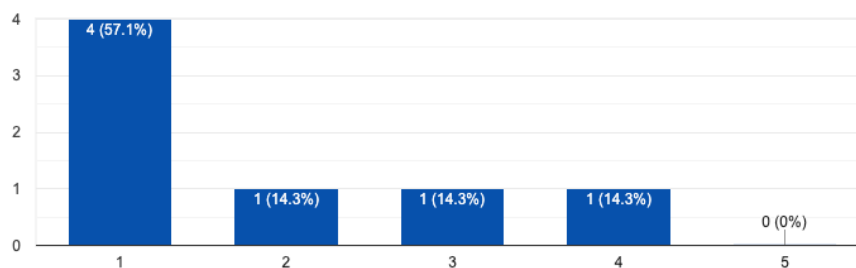
While I only received feedback from five of the seven participants the feedback provided from these individuals was indispensable.

One of the main points of evaluation I was seeking during this project was to see if conducting this course would quantitatively increase participants’ self-ascribed knowledge in the Creative Problem-Solving process. Figure 1 demonstrates the feedback before the start of the first week of the program, with most participants having identified a limited knowledge around the CPS process.

Figure 1.*Pre-course Feedback Regarding the Creative Problem-Solving Process*

On a scale from 1-5 (with 1 being the least), how well do you know the Creative Problem-Solving process?

7 responses

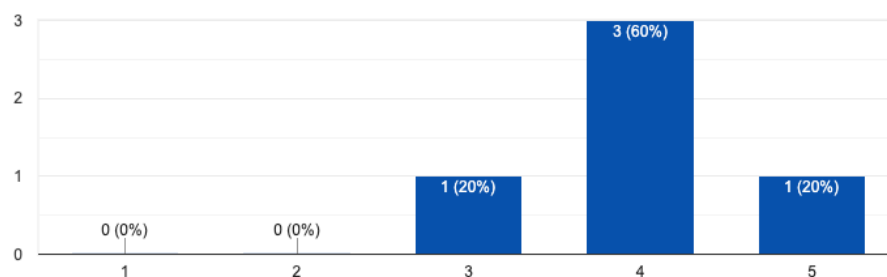


The post-course feedback in Figure 2 demonstrated a notable increase in individuals who ranked themselves as knowing the CPS process well, based on the participants who completed the feedback form.

Figure 2:*Post-course Feedback Regarding the Creative Problem-Solving Process*

On a scale from 1-5 (with 1 being the least), how well do you know the Creative Problem-Solving process?

5 responses



In terms of the virtual platforms used, I received helpful feedback that most folks seemed to enjoy using Mural, though one participant cited the challenge of learning one more online tool (in a virtual-pandemic world) and that it could be overwhelming to be on one board all together at the same time. They also suggested combining the separate boards onto one massive Mural

board for ease of navigation between the steps which I would definitely like to experiment with in the future.

Some members of the cohort liked Slack but wished there were more group interactions on the platform. Some members cited they did not sign up for notifications to come through which may have influenced the participation. Others did not want to add an additional online platform to their repertoire due to virtual burnout. In the future, I will definitely check in with the group and get more collective feedback and buy-in before choosing a group communication tool.

In addition to online platforms, participants were asked to rate their experiences with the Extended Learning Opportunities which included an idea journal, Morning Pages, a creativity-themed meditation, failure resume and creativity independent study. The responses were mixed based on each activity, though the highest rated activities included the creativity mediation, idea journal, and failure resume. A few participants suggested incentivizing the activities to help motivate participation or choose activities specific to FourSight or working on their specific business goals.

Feedback participants all rated FourSight as a very helpful tool and commented how much they appreciated having a framework and common language for their thinking preference in the CPS process. Many participants cited their personal experience of FourSight as one of the main takeaways from the program. As a facilitator, knowing participant's thinking preferences was incredibly helpful during the facilitation process and during our one-on-one debriefs as I was able to point out when they were exhibiting energy preferences as a learning opportunity.

In terms of accountability, a few group members mentioned the importance of the one-on-one check-in and perhaps even adding an additional week to the program to spend more time wrapping up implementation plans and developing more of a plan for the future. Another

participant mentioned that accountability was not something they were expecting from the group, and that the focus of this program is more on “community and creativity boosting.” I appreciated this point as it was not central to the recruitment materials I developed for the course, even though it was an outcome I had hoped would naturally occur due to the group environment.

A common theme cited throughout the feedback form was the importance of the group and the community that was formed during the nine weeks together. Many participants mentioned it was their favorite part of the program and that it surprised them how creative everyone is and how the collective power of a group can generate so many ideas and solutions in such a short amount of time. One participant even mentioned that they were surprised how much they enjoyed and were energized by working on other group member’s goal/wish/challenge.

I appreciated that the group all ranked my facilitation with the highest marks and all unanimously said that the *Dare to Create Launchpad* was worth the time investment. Despite the mention of it being challenging to be involved in such a long program (especially at the end of a long workday), the group’s feedback was overall very positive about the program and several members even used the term “life-changing” to describe the experience.

SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS

The following section outlines the main takeaways from developing and implementing the Dare to Create Launchpad. This includes the importance of community, the theme of time, and a review of my skills as both a presenter and Creative Problem-Solving facilitator.

Community

One of the largest key learnings for me was the power and importance of community, especially to entrepreneurs who may be solo employees in their business (as was true for all seven participants in the *Dare to Create Launchpad*). Conducting facilitations via Zoom and Mural created a unique challenge during the convergence phase of the process wherein the client needed time and space to process ideas and highlight and hit the ones they wanted to move forward in the process. During an in-person facilitation, this space may be created by providing a bathroom break, handing out a word search or inviting fellow resource group members to chat amongst themselves. In an online setting, this was achieved through a Zoom breakout room.

I was initially concerned at the beginning of the program that these breakout rooms would require a high level of structure as I would not be able to monitor the room and ensure participants were comfortable with one another and themselves. However, after the first night it was revealed (and confirmed through the post-course feedback form) that the breakout room was one of the highlights of the program. While I always invited the resource group to an online word search or to consider working on an Extended Learning Opportunity, the group members would return and share how they spent the time team building and networking amongst themselves. What I had considered a hazard and unknown of the program ended up becoming the metaphoric “glue” that helped to construct the program community in a very short amount of time.

I was grateful for the opportunity to connect offline with participants as clients during our one-on-one prep and debrief times together as a chance to build rapport and understand their needs as business-owners. Several group members shared their experiences connecting offline on social media and even spending time outside our Monday evenings to discuss a particular area of growth for business. The community growth was organic and truly helped to make the program as rich and effective as it was.

One of my concerns around the future implications of this program is replicating the specific group dynamics and ensuring that the bond and safe environment set in this group is able to translate to other groups in the future. I believe that laying the groundwork as the facilitator and creative leader to set a creative climate will be one of the keys to creating a similar group dynamic in the future.

Time

The theme of time is another major learning from conducting the *Dare to Create Launchpad*. I was amazed by how much we were able to accomplish during the nine weeks together, but I agree with participants that adding in an additional week would have helped to space out the “closing ceremonies” and allow more time for processing and building out goals for future implementation. This would also allow for additional closing activities that would invite participants to share more positive affirmations with each other rather than (or in addition to) spending time focusing inward on their own learning journey. This would also create time for participants to complete the vital post-course feedback form before sending participants away after completing the course.

Another takeaway is that the group was verbally quite responsive to the idea of a three-month “reunion” or check-in (after the last week of the program) wherein participants can gather

to share how they implemented the ideas from the *Dare to Create Launchpad* facilitations. This would also be a chance to refresh the group on the tools we learned and create a sense of accountability for participants as they continue in their respective creative learning journey.

Presentation Skills

Another key learning from this experience was my skills as a presenter and facilitator. A multitude of encouraging comments from the feedback forms highlighted my skills as a facilitator that was able to hold space for vulnerability and action. However, many comments included the need for me to grow in my confidence as a presenter, specifically through not calling attention to my own mistakes and shortcomings while presenting and leaning into my strengths as a clarifier.

I think that my overview of creativity presentation during the first week would have been an opportunity to make the experience much more interactive for participants (especially for an online setting) and set the stage for future weeks of the program. This could specifically be achieved by quickly orienting the group to Mural much sooner in the program and conducting a quick facilitation in order to display and provide real-time context to the tools used during the Creative Problem-Solving process. Throughout all of my presentation examples, using examples that would relate especially to a small business-owner would be an easier way to make the material relatable and understandable.

Overall, I wished that I had more time to practice my presentations for the first two weeks of the curriculum. I think creating more of an outline of notes instead of depending on simplistic slides to prompt my presentation material would have helped alleviate my nerves and created space for peace and confidence in my presentation. Of course, as one participant noted in the

feedback form, “practice makes progress”, and I believe that continuing to practice and refine my presentation will continue to build my confidence as a presenter.

Facilitation Skills

One of the greatest lessons I learned during my facilitations from this program was the importance of balancing the needs and direction of the client with challenging them as the facilitator on what is achievable with the CPS process. Specifically, it is important to know and communicate what specifically constitutes as a creative challenge (a goal/wish/challenge that a business owner has agency over, is motivated to solve and requires creativity) and phrase prompts throughout the facilitation process that will help resource group members to best help the client. Unfortunately, I felt it took a few sessions of back-to-back facilitations for me to truly identify the importance of this for making a successful facilitation for the client.

This aspect is especially true when a business-owner may come up against challenges in their ideas that center on doing important introspective work that cannot necessarily be achieved with a creative-focused resource group. For example, if a client is identifying that the fear of failure is an obstacle in their ability to move forward with an idea, it may not be that the resource group would be able to solve that challenge with creativity. As one participant cleverly noted one evening, seeking “extuition” (or group feedback) for a problem that requires intuition may not be the best way to solve a goal/wish/challenge. I look forward to the opportunity to run more cohorts of this curriculum and get more practice with additional facilitations in order to hone my skill in being able to navigate this complex process terrain.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION

In many ways, this Master's project has affirmed that the *Dare to Create Launchpad* can be a successful and viable way to engage small business-owners in the Creative Problem-Solving process, provide a platform for building community and become creatively energetic in the way they perceive future goals/wishes/challenges. More so, this project and the positive feedback from group members confirmed to me that this program can be a valuable offering for my future business as a creativity coach/facilitator/trainer.

In the future, I can envision the *Dare to Create Launchpad* being one of several offerings for my business, Joybrick. Ideally, the *Dare to Create Launchpad* is the first step of many for small business-owners to lean into their creative confidence and build a community of support specializing in the creative problem-solving process. I look forward to the potential of building alumni events (especially as alumni would already be oriented on the virtual platforms and have a background in FourSight), in-person events (once it is safe again to do so) including week-long retreats, and even a podcast focused on creativity in the small-business sector.

In the future, I would like to consider ways to measure and evaluate the actual effectiveness of the program and determine a way of tracking the tangible results of program participants. This could be through qualitative testimony, but I would be curious to find a quantitative way to measure the results of the program as well.

Overall, the *Dare to Create Launchpad* was a successful endeavor in bringing together a group of seven widely different and incredible small business-owners to share in community and learn together. Although I was facilitating, I walked away from this experience feeling as though I learned even more valuable insight into my own creative thought process and how I hope to integrate creativity into my future business and life.

References

- Brown, B. (2015). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*: Penguin.
- Cameron, J. (2021). Morning pages. Retrieved March 23, 2021, from <https://juliacameronlive.com/basic-tools/morning-pages/>
- Firestien, R. L. (2020). *Create in a Flash: A Leader's Recipe for Breakthrough Innovation*. Green Tractor Publishing.
- Firestien, R. (2021, January 29). *Create in a Flash Book*. Roger Firestien. <https://rogerfirestien.com/create-in-a-flash/>.
- FourSight Assessment. Retrieved from: <https://foursightonline.com/about-foursight/>
- Kaufman, J.C., & Beghetto, R. A. (2009). *Beyond big and little: The four c model of creativity*. *Review of General Psychology*, 13(1), 1-12.
- Kelley, T., Kelley, D. (2013). *Creative confidence: Unleashing the creative potential within us all*. Crown Business.
- Henriksen, D., Richardson, C., & Shack, K. (2020). Mindfulness and creativity: Implications for thinking and learning. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 37, 100689. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100689
- Mehmood, M. S., Jian, Z., & Akram, U. (2020). Be so creative they can't ignore you! How can entrepreneurial leader enhance the employee creativity? *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 38, 100721. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100721
- Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011). *Creativity unbound: An introduction to creative process, 5th edition*. FourSight, LLC.
- Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011). *Facilitation: a door to*

- creative leadership, 4th edition*. FourSight, LLC.
- Osborn, A. (1953). *Applied imagination: Principles and procedures of creative problem-solving*. Creative Education Foundation.
- Parnes, S.J. & Noller, R.B. (1972). Applied creativity: the creative studies project: Part I – The Development. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 6(1), 11-22.
- Parnes, S.J. & Noller, R.B. (1972). Applied creativity: the creative studies project: Part II – Results of the two year program . *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 6(3), 164-186.
- Parnes, S. J. (1988). *Visionizing*. Creative Education Foundation Press.
- Puccio, G.J., Mance, M., & Murdock, M.C. (2011). *Creative Leadership: Skills that drive change (2nd ed.)*. Sage.
- Puccio, G. J., Mance, M., Switalski, L. B., & Reali, P. D. (2012). *Creativity rising: Creative thinking and creative problem solving in the 21st century*. ICSC Press.
- Puccio, G. J., Firestien, R. L., Coyle, C., & Masucci, C. (2006, February 15). *A Review of the Effectiveness of CPS Training: A Focus on Workplace Issues*. Wiley Online Library. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8691.2006.00366.x>.
- Sawyer, R. (2019). The role of failure in learning how to create in art and design. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 33, 100527. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2018.08.002
- Scott, G., Leritz, L. E., & Mumford, M. D. (2004). The Effectiveness of Creativity Training: A Quantitative Review. *Creativity Research Journal*, 16(4), 361-388. doi:10.1207/s15326934crj1604_1
- Stefan, M. (2010). A CV of failures. *Nature*, 468(7322), 467-467. doi:10.1038/nj7322-467a
- Stein, M. I. (1953). Creativity and culture. *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 36, 311–322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1953.9712897>

Torrance, E.P., & Safter, H. (1990). *The incubation model of teaching: Getting beyond the aha!*

Bearly Limited.

Appendix A: Recruitment Document

Dare to Create Launchpad Beta Course February 15, 2021 - April 12, 2021

What is this course about?

The *Dare to Create Launchpad* is an innovative program for small business-owners (especially those who identify as being a woman, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and/or LGBTQ+) to step into their creative confidence through a nine-week intensive course that will explore the power of creativity and the research-backed Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) process.

Together, a group of seven participants will experience this weekly, intimate virtual course that partners curriculum with community. The program will begin with an overview of creativity and the framework of the CPS process and provide participants with the opportunity to learn their cognitive thinking preference through the [FourSight](#) assessment, which reveals and provides insights into the way in which you naturally solve a problem.

Building on this foundation, the group will be led through weekly creative problem-solving facilitations that will alternate focusing on each individual participant's small business and a goal/wish/challenge they would like to explore and develop. In the alternative weeks, participants will grow in their creative confidence by acting as a resource group member to other participants during their facilitations. In addition, an optional exercise/activity will be presented each week to the group as an opportunity for extended learning throughout the week.

Sessions will be led by Rachel Voelke-Kuhlmann, candidate for M.S. in Creativity and Change Leadership at SUNY Buffalo State in the International Center for Studies in Creativity and certified FourSight Mindset Facilitator. The development of this curriculum serves as her Master's Project. The course involves providing feedback and completing a brief assessment prior to and after the course. All participant information will remain confidential. Participation is voluntary.

This beta course is best for someone who:

- Owns (or would like to own) a small business, especially as an underrepresented/underestimated group member such those who identify as women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+
- Is seeking a small community of other business owners to grow, explore, connect, learn and be held accountable alongside one another
- Would like to learn more about how creativity can transform their business (and life) and build their creative confidence through interactive tools, solving real world problems in real time
- Is interested in understanding their cognitive thinking preference for solving a problem, specifically through the lens of the FourSight assessment

- Is curious in learning more about a scientifically backed framework and tangible and innovative tools that will clarify a problem, generate ideas, evaluate solutions and create a roadmap for implementing those ideas

Why focus on small business-owners who identify as women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+?

While these groups are quickly growing in the space of small business ownership, their businesses have also been the most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. One of the central tenants to the *Dare to Create Launchpad* is to attempt to build equity through the lens of creativity training.

What will we do during our sessions?

Week 1: Introductions and an overview of the Creative Problem-Solving process

Week 2: FourSight Assessment Debrief

Weeks 3-9: Individual Creative Problem-Solving facilitations

Each participant will receive one week dedicated to their creative goal/wish/challenge with other participants acting as a resource group, or sounding board, for idea generation and evaluation. Rachel will meet individually with each participant the week of their individual facilitation to go over their goal/wish/challenge and set up the facilitation.

All sessions will be held on Zoom and involve using a collaborative tool called Mural. As a note, all participants must have access to a computer with keyboard and internet. As each session will be highly interactive, participants should come prepared to learn through participation in a supportive environment.

Structure + Components:

- Nine 2-hour group Zoom sessions (featuring the use of Mural)
- FourSight Assessment and group debrief of results
- One, hour long 1:1 consultation during the randomized week of facilitation
- Weekly, optional extended learning opportunities
- Slack group thread for resource sharing, support and accountability
- Recap emails after each session

Group Session Dates + Times: Monday Evenings via Zoom

2/15	6:30-8:30pm EST
2/22	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/1	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/8	6:30-8:30pm EST

3/15	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/22	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/29	6:30-8:30pm EST
4/5	6:30-8:30pm EST
4/12	6:30-9:00pm EST*

*extended by a half-hour for course wrap-up

Thank you for considering being a part of this experience, which will be a learning experience for everyone involved. Contact Rachel (Rachel.voelkle@gmail.com) for more information or to sign up to participate.

Appendix B: Onboarding Email Template

Hi _____!

First off, **thank you** for joining me for the *Dare To Create Launchpad* beta course! I appreciate you carving out the time for what I hope to be a transformative nine weeks of learning, growing and community. While this beta course serves as my Master's Project, it is my sincerest hope that this course is beneficial to you and helps you step more fully into your creative confidence, especially as a business-owner. :)

Before we get started for our first session on 2/15, there are a couple of housekeeping items and onboarding activities for your review:

Dates + Times

As a reminder, the course begins on Monday, February 15th and will run weekly on Monday nights from 6:30-8:30pm EST via Zoom for nine weeks (wrapping up on Monday, April 12). I have included the listing of these dates below- if for some reason you are not able to attend all nine weeks, please let me know as soon as possible. I will be following up with a calendar invite with the link to the Zoom meeting.

Course Materials

As a reminder, we will be using Zoom and a platform called Mural during our time together. You will need access to a computer with a keyboard (desktop/laptop is ideal- iPads and phones are very difficult to navigate using these apps). If you have access to a mouse (helps with zooming in and out of Mural) and/or secondary monitor it will help, but they are not necessary at all for participation.

I will be sending out some course materials and goodies to all our participants this week- if you could send me your mailing address ASAP I will send those along to you! :)

Pre-course Feedback

If you would, please complete this Pre-course Feedback form before our first meeting on February 15th. It should only take a few minutes to complete and all feedback is anonymous.

Slack

We will be using the app Slack throughout the nine weeks as our primary space to communicate, network, troubleshoot, brainstorm and dream together. I will be inviting you via email to our private Slack "channel", which is like a messenger and email service wrapped into one. The app is free and can be downloaded on your phone, though you can also access the app through your desktop/laptop.

Bio Profile

While we will be taking some time for introductions at our first meeting, please take a few minutes to complete this Bio Profile. This will be shared with other course participants prior to our first session to assist us all in putting a face to a name, especially since we will be running

the course virtually! If possible, please complete your profile by next Wednesday, 2/10 so I am able to share your profile with the rest of the participants before our first session.

Course Tracker

Phew! I realize that's a lot of info in one email! In order to help keep everything organized, I have created an individual course tracker that lists out action items to follow throughout our time together. You are welcome to use the list however you would like and I have already added in the action items from this email into the tracker.

Thank you so much again for your willingness to participate in this program, and please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions you may have. Have an awesome rest of your week and I look forward to connecting with you soon!

With gratitude,
Rachel

Group Session Dates + Times: Monday Evenings via Zoom

2/15	6:30-8:30pm EST
2/22	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/1	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/8	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/15	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/22	6:30-8:30pm EST
3/29	6:30-8:30pm EST
4/5	6:30-8:30pm EST
4/12	6:30-9:00pm EST*

*extended by a half-hour for course wrap-up

Appendix C: Pre-course Feedback Form



Dare to Create Launchpad Beta Course: Pre-course feedback

Thank you for taking the time to provide your anonymous feedback in anticipating of the Dare to Create Launchpad. I am excited to work with you and appreciate you honest and candid thoughts to help build the best creativity curriculum possible.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at rachel.voelkle@gmail.com or 716-560-0599.

* Required

What questions about creativity do you have coming into this course? What are you curious about? *

Your answer _____

What are you excited about with this course? *

Your answer _____

What are you apprehensive about? What do you think will be the greatest challenge(s) over the next nine weeks? *

Your answer _____

On a scale from 1-5 (with 1 being the least), how well do you know the Creative Problem-Solving process? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Least	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Most

What do you know about the Creative Problem-Solving process, including any specifics? *

Your answer _____

On a scale from 1-5 (with 1 being the least), how well do you know the Mural app?

*

Least 1 2 3 4 5 Most

On a scale from 1-5 (with 1 being the least), how well do you know the Slack app?

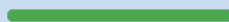
*

Least 1 2 3 4 5 Most

Any other comments or anything else I should be aware of?

Your answer _____

Submit



Page 1 of 1

Appendix D: Bio Profile

Dare to Create Launchpad (Beta)

Jane Doe

Pronouns:

Insert your photo here...



What led you to starting this business? What is your story/experience?

Insert answer here...

Who/what inspires you?

Insert answer here...

Business/idea name?

Insert answer here...

What are you most proud of (personal or professional)?

Insert answer here...

How many years have you been in business?

Insert answer here...

What is your favorite quote?

Insert answer here...

Brief description of your business

Insert answer here...

Most recent fave book/podcast/movie/show?

Insert answer here...

What is a "fun fact" about you?

Insert answer here...

How to find or reach **Jane Doe**:

Business Location:

111 Main Street
City, State, ZIP

Social media handles:

Insta:@
FB:@
Twitter: @

Website: youareawesome.com

Email: jane@awesome.com

Appendix E: Course Tracker

Task	Complete by	Notes	Complete	Comments/Questions
Complete DTC Bio Profile and return to Rachel	2/10/21			
Download and register for Slack app	2/15			
Complete DTC Onboarding Feedback form	2/15			
Complete FourSight Assessment (see link in email)	2/20			
Continue to reflect on your business goal/wish/challenge	before your 1:1 with Rachel			
Practice Mural in Mural Obstacle Course	3/1			
Start an idea journal	Ongoing			
Try Morning Pages a couple times this week	Ongoing			
Draft a "Failure" resume/Anti-portfolio (here is Rachel's)	3/22			
Prepare 2 minute TED talk based on creativity Independent Study	4/5			
Check out the archived Mural boards	Ongoing			
Complete client Facilitation feedback form	4/12			
Feel free to leave feedback in Comment Box	Ongoing, optional			
Complete DTCL post-course feedback form	4/15			
Send Rachel your personal manifesto	4/18			

Appendix F: Comment Box

Dare to Create Launchpad Comment Box

Please feel free to leave your feedback and suggestions for Rachel and the Dare to Create Launchpad below. Your feedback will be anonymous (unless you would like me to respond, in which case please let me know in your response). Thank you in advance for your honesty!

* Required

1. Feedback/Suggestions: *

Appendix G: Client Facilitation Feedback Form



DTCL Creative Problem-Solving Client Facilitation Feedback

Thank you so much for participating as a client for a Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) facilitation with me!

As I grow my practice, your feedback is incredibly helpful and valuable in my learning journey. Thank you in advance for your honest thoughts.

Thanks again,
Rachel

On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being the best), how was your experience with our one-on-one time together?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Your answer _____

On a scale from 1-5 with (with 5 being the best), how was your overall experience with the CPS facilitation and process?

1 2 3 4 5

What did you like best about your CPS experience?

Your answer _____

What parts of the Creative Problem-Solving facilitation could I improve on? What parts of the facilitation left you wanting more clarification or that you wish we would have spent more time on? Anything that I could do to make the experience better for you? (Your honesty is greatly appreciated!)

Your answer _____

Do you feel like your Creative Problem-Solving facilitation helped you answer the goal/wish/challenge you were hoping to solve?

- Heck yes!
- Kind of
- Not really
- Not at all. What is CPS?
- Other: _____

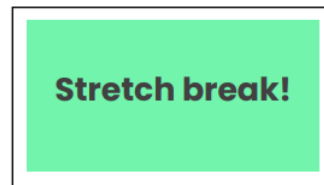
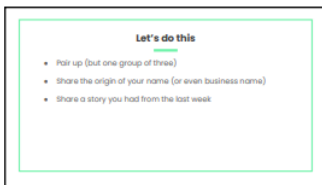
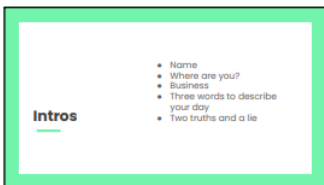
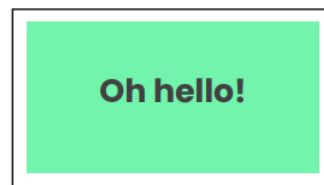
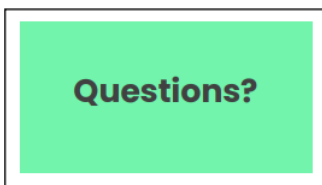
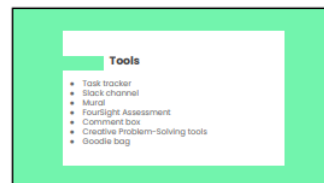
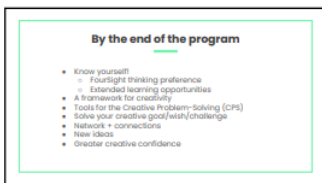
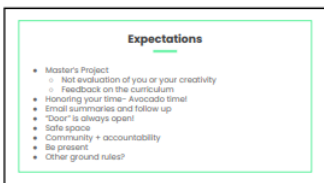
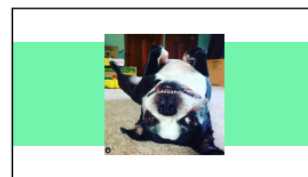
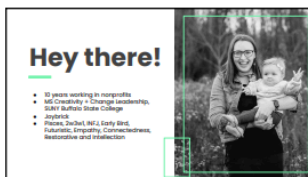
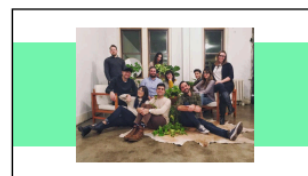
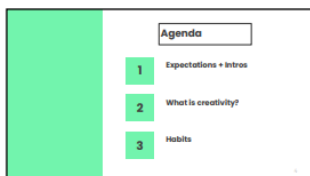
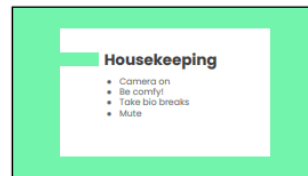
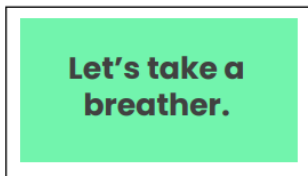
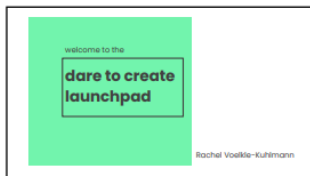
Anything else I should know?

Your answer _____

Submit

Appendix H: Creative Problem-Solving 101 PowerPoint

Note: This is an example of some of the slides that were shared in the *Dare to Create Launchpad*. Any images I did not have permission to share have been omitted.



What is creativity?

Novel + Useful

Stein, 1953; Runco and Jaeger, 2002

But I am not creative!

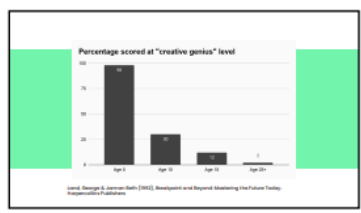
"Creative thinking is not a talent, it is a skill that can be learned. It empowers people by adding strength to their natural abilities which improves teamwork, productivity, and, where appropriate, profits."
-Edward deBono

Creativity scars

...55 percent of the men and women we interviewed...could recall a school incident from their childhood that was so shaming that it changed how they thought of themselves as learners. What makes this even more haunting is that approximately half of those recollections were what I refer to as **creativity scars**. The research participants could point to a specific incident where they were told or shown that they weren't good writers, artists, musicians, dancers, or something creative."
-Dr. Brian Brown
(*Daring Creativity*, 2015, p. 189-190)

What do creativity scars sound like?

"That's the way we have always done things"
"It's too expensive"
"It won't work"
"Let's not upset the apple cart"



"But out of limitations come creativity"
-Debbie Allen

Equation for creativity

$$C = f_a(K, I, E)$$

Creativity (C) is a function (f) of your attitude (a) multiplied by knowledge (K), imagination (I) and evaluation (E)

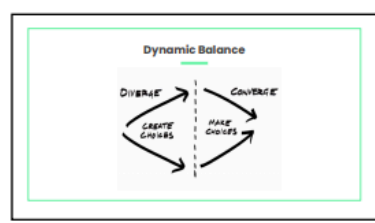
Dr. Ruth Heller, SUNY Buffalo State College

Equation for attitude

$$a = V, DP, IM$$

Attitude is a combination of:
Vision (V)- your goals
Deliberate Practice (DP)- the tools of CPS
Intrinsic Motivation (IM)- desire for change

Patrick W. J. Meenan, M. S. Bahadur, L. K. & Reed, P. D. (2002). *Creativity: Using Creative Thinking and Creative Problem Solving in the 21st Century*. Guilford Press.



Divergent Thinking

- Defer judgment
- Strive for quantity (last third of ideas are the gold!)
- Make connections
- Seek novelty

Convergent Thinking

- Be deliberate
- Check your objectives
- Be affirmative
- Examine, refine, revise and improve
- Consider novelty

Incubation

Taking a step back and allow unconscious thought

Creative Problem Guidelines

- Ownership** - Is it your responsibility?
- Motivation** - Do you really want to solve it?
- Imagination** - Do you need creative ideas?

Creative Problem: New customers

Clarify: Goal/Wish/Challenge

- Broad and not too specific
- Brief, like a book title
- Positive, focusing on what you want

Clarify: Challenge Statement

Statement starter + Owner + Verb + Object

Ex: **How might I find new customers?**

Clarify: Challenge Statement Starters

- How might we... (HMW)
- How to... (H2)
- In what ways... (IWW)
- What might be all the ways... (WMBAT)

Clarify: Redefine the problem

Ideate: Tools

- Stick up Brainstorming
- Forced Connections
- SCAMPER
- Brainwriting
- Excursions

Ideate: Highlighting

- Identify Hits:
 - Clear
 - Interesting
 - Feels right
 - Intriguing
 - Solve the challenge
 - Sparkiest

Develop: Tools

- PFCs (Yays, mays, noys, hoorays)
- Evaluation Matrix
- Card sort
- Targeting
- Managing risk

Develop

"The best way to make your work better is to get more imaginative about how it could fail to resonate with those you seek to serve."

-Seth Godin

Implement: Tools

- Assistants and Resistors
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Action Steps
- Performance Dashboard
- The Learning Cycle

"It's hard to look right at it. The possibility that lies before us, the chance to connect, to lead, to be heard- it's bigger than it's ever been.

Tempting indeed to avert your eyes, because staring into infinity means embracing just how small we feel. We avert our eyes because to realize how much potential we have to contribute puts us on the hook. But whether we ignore it or not, the infinity of possibility remains. Dance with it."

-Seth Godin

Questions?

Takeaways

What might be all the takeaways and ways you can use Creative Problem-Solving in your business and life?

A look ahead...

- Next week: FourSight
- Weeks 3-12: Your facilitation!
 - What goal/wish/challenge would you like to explore?
 - Meet 1:1 with Rachel
- Extended Learning Opportunities
- Feedback (comment box, journal)

Last thoughts...

- Before next week:
 - FourSight Assessment
 - Mutual Obstacle Course
 - Slack
- Your facilitation week
- You are amazing. Full stop.

Thank you!

rachel.veelke@gmail.com
716.560.0599

Credits

This is where you give credit to the ones who are part of this project. Did you like the resources on this template? Get them for free at our other websites. Presentation template by [slidesgo](#) Icons by [flaticon](#) Images & Infographics by [iStock](#) Author introduction slide photo created by [katenangostar](#) - Freepik.com Big image slide photo created by [Joamp](#) - Freepik.com Text & image slide photo created by [veepik.com](#) - Freepik.com Text & image slide photo created by [Freepik](#)

Appendix I: Mural Board Templates

Mural Obstacle Course

MURAL OBSTACLE COURSE

Mural Video Tutorials:
*Note- Mural works best in Chrome!

1 Where in the world
Write your name on a pin and add it on the world map where you're located!

2 Your why
Why do you want to leave your current business? What motivates you?

3 Album art
If your business had an album cover, what would it look like?

4 Superpowers
What's your superpower? Your secret weapon? What special skill do you bring to your clients?

5 GIF tournament
Find the best GIF for the expression: "It's a piece of cake!"
What's a piece of cake?
What's your favorite GIF?
What's your favorite GIF?
What's your favorite GIF?

Mural Playground

DTCL Mural Playground

Divergent Thinking Guidelines

- Deliver judgment
- Strive for quantity
- Make connections
- Seek novelty

Convergent Thinking Guidelines

- Be deliberate
- Check your objectives
- Be affirmative
- Consider novelty

Highlighting the hits:

- Clear
- Interesting
- Feels right
- Injuring
- Solve the challenge
- Sparkles!

Virtual Post Its

- Give ideas your place
- Write the idea succinctly
- Write the essence of the idea
- Zoom

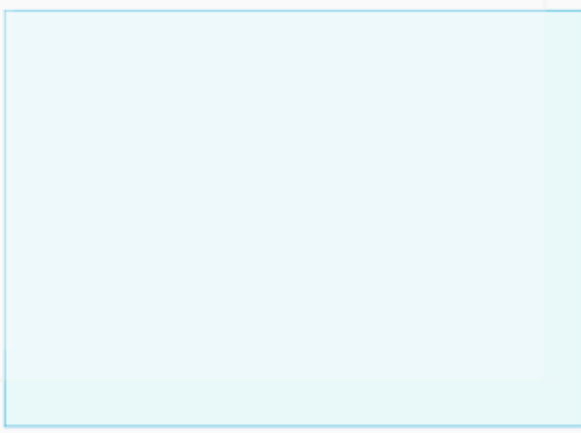
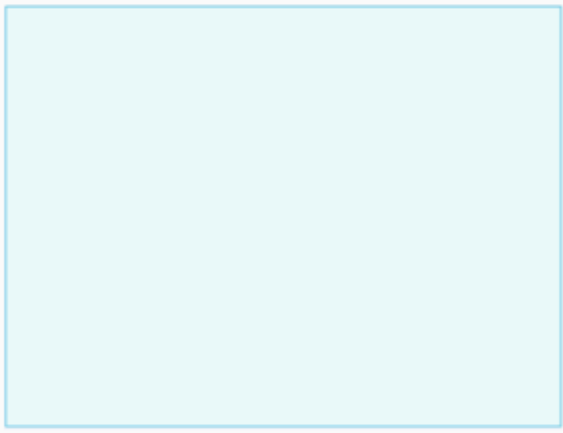
Background

WMBAT things we could do with a pile of leaves?

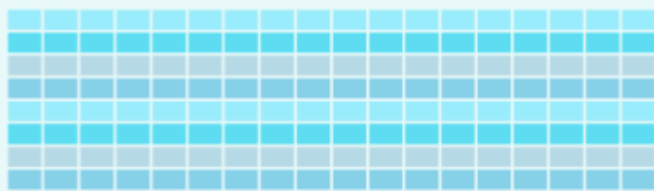
Clarify Mural Board

Dare to Create Launchpad - Clarify

Divergent Thinking Guidelines -Defier judgement -Strive for quantity -Make connections -Seek novelty	Convergent Thinking Guidelines -Be deliberate -Check your objectives -Be affirmative -Consider novelty	Highlighting the hits: -Clear -Grounding -Feels right -Engaging -Solves the challenge -Sparkles!	Challenge Statements: -How to (P)O... -How might (P)M... -In what ways might (P)WIM... -What might be all the ways (P)M&A?... 
---	---	---	---



Data Questions It would be great if	Creative questions + problem restatements -How to (P)O... -How might (P)M... -In what ways might (P)WIM... -What might be all the ways (P)M&A?...
---	--



Ideate Mural Board

Dare to Create Launchpad - Ideate

Divergent Thinking Guidelines

- Defer judgment
- Strive for quantity
- Make connections
- Seek novelty

Convergent Thinking Guidelines


- Be collaborative
- Check your objectives
- Be affirmative
- Consider novelty

Highlighting the hits:

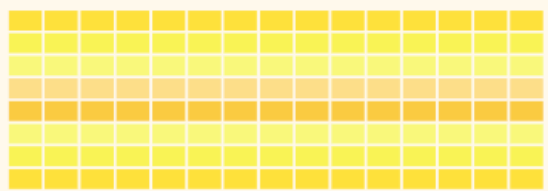
- Clear
- Interesting
- Feels right
- Inspiring
- Go on the challenge
- Spontaneous

Challenge Statements:

- How to (H)?
- How right (R)?
- What will make right (R) (W)?
- What might be all the ways (W) (M)?



Challenge Statement: HM...



S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

What I see myself doing is...

Evaluation Matrix Mural Board

Creative Problem-Solving 101- Develop

Divergent Thinking Guidelines

- Defers judgment
- Seeks for quantity
- Make connections
- Seek novelty

Convergent Thinking Guidelines


- Be collaborative
- Check your objectives
- Be affirmative
- Consider novelty

Highlighting the hits:

- Clear
- Interesting
- Pays it off
- Applicable
- Solves the challenge
- Sparked

Challenge Statements:

- How to (IT)...
- How might (IM)...
- In what ways might (IWWM)...
- What might be all the ways (WMDAT)...



What I see myself doing is: _____

What does my idea have to be for me to want to do it? (phrased positively)
Will it...? Does it...? Is it...?

A- Excellent					
B-Good					
C-Okay					
D- Not good					
E-Poor					
F-Fail					

Solve for criteria with "fail" ratings:

Implement Mural Board

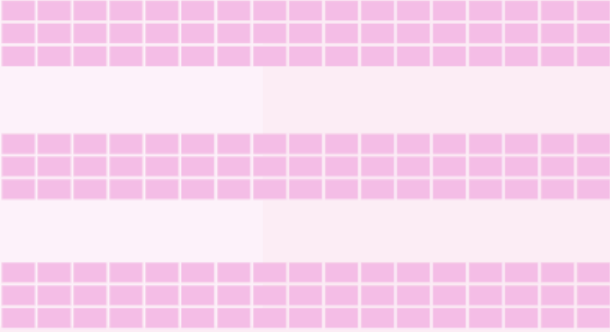
Creative Problem-Solving 101- Implement

Divergent Thinking Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Defer judgment-Strive for quantity-Make connections-Seek novelty	Convergent Thinking Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Be deliberate-Check your objectives-Be affirmative-Consider novelty	Highlighting the hits: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Clear-Interesting-Feels right-Inspiring-Solves the challenge-Spontaneous!	Challenge Statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-How to J-G?-How many PMS?-In what ways right? (SWBAT)...-Was right on all the ways? (ANDAT)...
---	---	---	---

In order to _____ I will:

In order to _____ I will:

In order to _____ I will:



Short term	Mid-term	Long term
Action to be done:		
What?		
By when?		
Report to?		

Permission to place this Project in the Digital Commons online

I hereby grant permission to the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State college permission to place a digital copy of this master's Project (Developing a Creativity Curriculum Intensive for Small Business-Owners) as an online resource.



Name

5/4/21

Date