

Launch Studio: Prototype of Pedagogy

We are combining a makerspace classroom with an entrepreneurship curriculum to help students learn to start their own businesses. Students often don't see the connection between what they are learning in school and the real world - "When will I ever need to know this?" is a common question they ask. Through our program, students see the subjects they are learning contextualized in the process of creating a business and earning money. In addition, they cultivate skills such as ideation, opportunity identification, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork to help prepare them for the future, regardless of what path they take.

Ideation & Prototyping

- Students make a list of resources that are available to them, skills they have, trends that are interesting to them, etc.
- Students consider the feedback they've received and market research they have performed
- Students come up with a product idea they want to make, and then map out what that will entail - this could look like a paper/cardboard prototype, or a specific plan and list of materials

Making

- Students create their products. Some potential ways:
- Student makes a design using Gravit Designer and then uses the laser cutter or the vinyl cutter (+ heat press or screen printer) to print their design
 - Student uses new materials to learn a new skill and create their product
 - Student finds a way to bulk produce their product for selling

Feedback & Reflection

Students are encouraged to solicit feedback from peers, instructors, and potential customers and reflect on their work at every step. This includes taking feedback into consideration when ideating a new product, taking ownership over learning new skills to improve and speed up their making process, altering packaging and branding strategies to better suit the market, and reacting to different scenarios while selling to better their communication with potential partners and customers.

Selling

Students sell their products in a few different ways:

- Approaching people on the street in a downtown area
- Going into local businesses to speak with store owners about potential partnerships
- Partnering with a pre-determined store through the program
- Selling at farmer's markets or similar family-friendly festivals with booths

Polishing & Branding

Students are encouraged to consider the following aspects of selling a product:

Packaging: Students think about how to present their product in a way that is neat and appealing

Marketing: Students are encouraged to keep a website or social media page updated, and to consider branding their product/business

Pitch: Students practice how they will present their product to strangers in different settings - on the street, in a store, etc. and learn to accept rejection gracefully