

Youth Entrepreneurs helps students discover, develop and apply their innate talents and abilities to fully unlock their potential. Through learning Principled Entrepreneurship and embracing the Foundational Values, students will move toward reaching their full potential.

This guidance provides support as you consider how you can implement student centered practices while facilitating Vacant Lot Opportunity Mindset. Remember: This is a journey alongside your students. You are not expected to be perfect!

Environment & Culture

- > What can the educator do to prepare their environment (consider virtual or in-person) to enhance the concepts taught during this activity?
 - Prior to facilitating this activity, consider showing the students the photos from the activity one by one as a large group. When showing the photos to the students, ask them the following questions:
 - Describe the people you think live in this neighborhood.
 - Describe what resources you believe those people have access to. (i.e. grocery stores, dollar stores, medical facilities, cash advancement businesses, etc.)
 - Describe what you believe their lifestyles to be like.
 - Describe how your life experiences may impact your perceptions about this neighborhood.
- > What are some examples of behaviors or things that the educator can give YE dollars for connected directly to the student acknowledging and understanding diverse social norms, recognizing situational demands and opportunities, and/or understanding the influences of organizations/systems on behavior (*SEL Core Competency Social Awareness*)?
 - When students acknowledge reasons contributing to their biases.
 - When students apply their learnings, observations and recognition of bias to their ideation and prototype of their vacant lot.
 - When students are not only solving the problem of the vacant lot but also connecting their solution to an act of social justice.
- > What questions can the educator ask to help students deepen their background knowledge (related to situational demands or influences of organizations/systems on behavior) in the activity?
 - What barriers might you face when proposing your vacant lot plan to the local city officials if you are [poor; black/brown in skin color; young v. old in age; native to that city or not, etc.]?
 - How might you overcome those stigmatizations and barriers to achieve your vacant lot overhaul?

Curricula

- > How can the activity be written to increase and support rigor?
 - Allow students choice in how they present their ideas for the vacant lot. Maybe they draw it on paper, use an ed tech tool, or create a model. Providing choice will allow for greater participation.
 - Use this activity as an introduction to [Vacant Lot PBL](#). The [essential project design elements of gold-standard PBL](#) inherently support an increase in rigor.

- > How is the activity designed to incorporate and challenge students to consider situational demands or influences of organizations/systems?
 - This activity provides a few design features that incorporate systems with situational demands or influences of organization/systems. First, if the educator chooses to implement the pre activity prep work, they are challenging their students to consider biases and have a discussion about why they associated items in the pictures with various groups of people and areas. Next, this activity gives the students an opportunity to dream big and ideate with limitless potential. It is up to the educator to model challenging the groups to consider strategies for overcoming barriers related to race, class, age, etc. when proposing their idea to a city official. Finally, students might consider systemic barriers and history of discrimination when designing their lots as they consider their customer. If they create a space to be occupied by one group of customers but do not consider “who else” they may create an unsafe environment with good intentions but in the end see their vacant lot become vacant yet again.
- > What are 2-3 debrief questions that can be written to discuss the impact of diversity, identities, system barriers and the different experiences of all students?
 - How did you feel when ideating about potential solutions for a community that you may not directly relate to?
 - How might you use your innate abilities to make change happen?

Instructional Methods

- > Feel confident in what you know and what you don't know. Incorporating SEL concepts at a deeper level means you get to practice humility when you're asked a question that you may not know the answer to. Remember, conversations of race, ethnicity, diversity, inclusion, systemic barriers, etc. are often uncomfortable and new to everyone. Your role is to create a safe space where students can feel comfortable to ask the questions without judgement or fear of reprimand for inquiring.
 - Remember what might feel “political” to an adult feels personal to a student. They may not understand the politics of topics like immigration or criminal justice but they do know family members that are unable to come visit the U.S. or are locked away in prison without a fair trial or realistic sentence. This is a genuine opportunity to deepen their empathy and social awareness skills.
- > Offer time for students to explore for answers, both the popular and non.
- > Offer time at the beginning of each class period for students to ask questions that might have brewed while away from your class. You may consider having an “anonymous box” for students to write their questions if they are uncomfortable asking in front of others. Use this option only until rapport is built, then encourage students to speak out as this is a soft skill that is important to develop – especially with difficult questions and conversations.

Educator Reflection

- > Did I...
 - Create a learning atmosphere where students felt respected by and connected to one another?
 - Help students favor participating in my class today because they had personal choice and felt the content was relevant to them?
 - Create challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that included my student's perspectives and values?
 - Help students connect that what they learned in my class today impacts something they value?

By striving to answer “yes” to the questions above, you are practicing a model of culturally responsive teaching based on intrinsic motivation. ([Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995](#))