



Discover Venture Valley

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Understand** the value and importance of teaching entrepreneurship and improving financial competence throughout the curriculum.
- **Consider** how gamified learning can enhance student engagement and support educational objectives.
- **Identify** ways to utilize Discover Venture Valley resources across the curriculum using the foundational knowledge and resources found throughout the Discover Venture Valley Masterclass Series.

INTRODUCTION

[Discover Venture Valley](#) is an initiative of the [Singleton Foundation](#) for Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship (Singleton Foundation) in collaboration with [Discovery Education](#) that supports educators in bringing entrepreneurship and financial literacy to life. The program features connections to the Singleton Foundation's engaging and educational game, [Venture Valley](#), as well as resources that can be used independently from the game. *Venture Valley* is a no-cost game that allows students to apply the knowledge they learn in the classroom to a real-world gaming experience. *Venture Valley* encourages students to take risks and practice the skills needed to be successful entrepreneurs.

Discover Venture Valley empowers students through engagement in foundational financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills. Through this program, students build the necessary background and skills needed to spark ideas for their own startups, manage personal finance, consider business plans/strategies, and the possibilities of forging a rewarding path to success.

Did you know that 60% of teens report being interested in entrepreneurship?

Source: [Junior Achievement](#), 2022



Through this Masterclass series, you will have the opportunity to visit a real classroom and consider how to harness gamification and embed entrepreneurship and financial literacy into your curriculum. You'll also discover valuable resources, available through Discover Venture Valley, that allow students to dream big and consider what their futures look like!

This Masterclass series introduces you to a California educator who is already impacting the lives of her students by encouraging them to consider their future career path and how they can change the world around them through entrepreneurship. As you step inside her classroom, consider how these lessons and practices could look in your classroom, with *your* students. Take the time to reflect on your practice, consider barriers, and explore how you could incorporate gamification, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship.



CLOSER LOOK

Today's students are intrigued by the concept of creating their own paths through new businesses. Educators like you can help them consider creating their own ventures and explore what it takes to be successful. It is important to consider the many forms that entrepreneurship can take and that many students may become "accidental" entrepreneurs someday. Consider, for example, the young person who enters trade school to become an electrician and ends up owning their own business down the road. Then there's the student with a passion for the law who one day opens their own practice. Some students may embrace a "side hustle"—finding it an enjoyable means of increasing their income.

In this Masterclass series, we explore both the value of teaching students about entrepreneurship but also how video games such as *Venture Valley* can ignite student engagement. In doing so, three themes emerge:

- **Theme 1:** Empowering Students to Consider Entrepreneurship
- **Theme 2:** Anyone Can Teach Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy
- **Theme 3:** Increase Engagement & Connect to the Real World Through Gamification

In this Discover Venture Valley Masterclass series, you will explore these two themes and consider how to incorporate these ideas into your teaching practice.

FEATURED EDUCATOR

Carrie Willis: (she/her), Technology & STEAM Director, Redlands, California

Carrie is a passionate lifelong learner who has over twenty years of experience in the field of education. She has a love for educational technology and project-based learning, as she sees the impact on student engagement and empowerment. Carrie actively works to inspire educators on her own campus and around the world by sharing her love of coding, robotics, movie production, engineering and design, and all things STEAM and EdTech. You can continue to learn from her experiences and expertise through social media, virtual webinars, and her presentations at local and national conferences.

THEME 1 | EMPOWERING AND CONNECTING CURRICULUM TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP & FINANCIAL LITERACY

"There's a lot more to entrepreneurship than you think there is. There's way more to consider than just starting a business." —Rosie

Entrepreneurs are everywhere—starting and running small local businesses tied to individual passions, creating side hustles that augment incomes, influencing what people purchase online, and building “the next big thing.”

Students see entrepreneurship in action every day in the world around them—both in their communities and online. Some see starting their own business as their opportunity to become their own boss, while others view entrepreneurship as a means of supplementing their incomes. Whether your students aspire to become the next Steve Jobs or Mr. Beast or simply wish to turn a passion into profit, chances are good they have considered ways they might become more entrepreneurial.

Becoming an entrepreneur and making money through entrepreneurship, though, are often two different things. Successful entrepreneurs understand more than just their product or service. They know their customers and how to market effectively to them, and they understand the financials of the business to maximize profits. Entrepreneurs must also become proficient in leading and managing people. Empowering students to consider entrepreneurship means considering each of these factors and more. Carrie Willis uses Discover Venture Valley resources and the *Venture Valley* game to engage her students in conversations that bring these factors to life and help them make connections with their own interests and goals for the future.

“Running a business is about more than just selling. You need to know your customers, what they want, and how you can help them—all skills students hone in *Venture Valley!*” —Ruby, *Venture Valley* mentor



THEME 2—EVERYONE CAN TEACH ENTREPRENEURSHIP & FINANCIAL LITERACY

"I'm no expert on entrepreneurship or financial literacy, so the Discovery Venture Valley lessons were really beneficial as much to me as a teacher as they were to my students." —Carrie Willis

Entrepreneurship and financial literacy are topics that fit into just about every aspect of the curriculum.

Perhaps you don't see yourself as an entrepreneurship or financial literacy teacher. That's okay. Many teachers don't see themselves that way either. In fact, it is rare to find dedicated coursework to these topics until students are in high school. Even then, they are often electives that reach only a handful of the student population. To make sure students learn about these vital subjects, they must be embedded into the core curriculum.

Carrie Willis demonstrates that any educator can embrace and tackle lessons in entrepreneurship and financial literacy. As a technology educator, she explores these topics with her students and gets them excited about considering entrepreneurship in their own lives. These concepts and principles are cross curricular.

[Discover Venture Valley](#) offers resources for educators to embed financial literacy and entrepreneurship into a variety of subjects. In the classroom activity, *Putting the "Inform" in Information*, students apply their math and data skills to business decisions. *To Pivot or Not to Pivot* offers students an opportunity to consider an important business decision, form an opinion, and defend it with a rational argument.

As an educator, you know that topics aren't—or at least shouldn't be—taught in a vacuum. Students learn best when they can apply what they are learning to topics that interest them.

"Entrepreneurship and financial literacy can be the lenses through which your students learn and reinforce important skills."

—Tekky, *Venture Valley* mentor



THEME 3—INCREASED ENGAGEMENT & CONNECTING TO THE REAL WORLD THROUGH GAMIFIED LEARNING

"Don't be scared to try gamified learning in your classroom. You'll really see your students' engagement levels go up, and you'll see that they're retaining knowledge. They're excited to learn!" —Carrie Willis

Gamified learning can lead to experiences that motivate, engage, and enhance learning.

Student engagement and motivation are often two major hurdles educators face every day. However, the thought of gamified learning may be overwhelming and seemingly impossible to implement.

In Carrie's classroom, she uses gamified learning to allow students to take risks without fear of failure. Students also benefit from personalized learning that connects to real world experiences. These elements increase engagement and give students opportunities to apply their learning to scenarios that are similar to what real entrepreneurs face.

Technology is sometimes a factor in choosing to implement game-based learning. It is okay to not have all the answers and secrets on how to best "win" or navigate through educational games. Students often just need help getting started and will look to you for curriculum connections. Another option is extending learning experiences outside of the classroom, after or before school.

If you're not ready to infuse technology-game-based learning in your classroom, you can still work on gamification through applying the principles of gaming to your classroom. Examples include creating badges, leaderboards, or rewards. Consider how to personalize these experiences for your students to make these experiences equitable.

REFLECT

Now that you have had the opportunity to see these themes play out in a real classroom, take a moment to reflect on your teaching practice:

- What entrepreneurs do your students encounter in your community or online? Which ones inspire them to consider entrepreneurship?
- Have you ever explored entrepreneurship? How can you harness your own personal interests to connect with students' entrepreneurial goals or ambitions?
- Where do entrepreneurship and financial literacy fit in your curriculum?
- How do you feel about using video games as an educational resource? Do you find them to be worthwhile or a challenge to use effectively?
- Are there particular students you feel would become more engaged in learning through game-based learning?

RESOURCES

The following [Discover Venture Valley](#) resources are designed for educators with varying levels of experience, including those who are interested in teaching about entrepreneurship and personal finance for the first time:

- Use the animated "[Practice Makes Profit](#)" Video Series to introduce students to a range of topics, including starting a business, how data can be used to inform an entrepreneur's decisions, and the different ways entrepreneurs earn income through their businesses. Ideas for using them to launch a conversation are provided in a corresponding [educator guide](#).
- Integrate entrepreneurship and personal finance lessons using the program's collection of [classroom activities](#). Designed for middle and high school educators, these hands-on, standards-aligned learning activities relate entrepreneurship and personal finance concepts to core curriculum content, including math, language arts, and social studies.
- Immerse students in the essentials of finance for both individuals and businesses with a series of interactive, multi-day [digital lesson plans](#).



LOOK FORWARD

Through these Masterclass videos, you had the opportunity to visit Carrie's classroom and see what entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and gamification look like in action! Next, consider how you can connect what you saw and learned to your own teaching practice and educational journey. Below are some next steps to consider:

- What do these practices look like within your own classroom and what are the possible impacts on your students and community? How can you further engage your students and connect gamification and entrepreneurship principles to your classroom?
- Which lesson will be foundational as you begin your journey? How will you infuse the principles you learned to engage your students in real-world problem-solving and connect learning to topics students are excited about?
- How can you encourage students to solve community problems using the skills and foundational knowledge obtained through the Discover Venture Valley program?

DIVE DEEPER

Want to take a deeper dive into entrepreneurship and personal finance education? Interested in what the experts say about gamification in the classroom? We've curated a variety of resources to get you started.

- Check out [Million Stories](#), a collection of engaging videos available from Discover Venture Valley's partner, the Singleton Foundation. [Ramen Profitable](#), [Startup Kids](#), and [Wags to Riches](#) are just some of the video series that could be used to engage students in thinking about entrepreneurship.
- Visualize the impact of entrepreneurship with the [Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship](#), which includes state-level data for yourself or students to explore.
- Have students who are ready to launch their own businesses? The Small Business Administration offers training and support through its [website](#) and regional [Small Business Development Centers](#).
- Read more about the benefits of gamification and ideas on how to get started through the [Smithsonian Science Education Center](#). Discover more about igniting student learning using gamification through [Edutopia](#).
- Discover Venture Valley and allow students to practice real-world scenarios in class, at home, or as a group! Games, like [Venture Valley](#), allow students to fail safely before venturing out into the real world of entrepreneurship!
- Have students consider how they can impact and improve the world around them through entrepreneurship.