

INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP (IAEE)

Questions for Educational Entrepreneur, Ruth Beauchamp



Oranda Consulting

IAEE: Describe your business and its history:

RB: I'm a coach, trainer, facilitator, content and product developer. I identify and actualize possibilities to support the growth of individuals and organizations. I describe myself as a "creative" and "inner wisdom leader" building on strengths and propelling others forward in their life's work.



-I work with heart-centered organizations by envisioning and leading new directions, providing coaching and professional development training.

- I partner with solo entrepreneurs to move their business forward with ideation, content and product development.

- I coach teens, young adults and career changers to discover career matches and set career goals that align with their assets and aptitudes.



-I sell my product,

Focus 1-2-3

which is a set of 24 color-coded activities to calm down, wake up, and gear up for learning.

It is also available as an [app](#) at itunes for ipad and iphones.

I founded **Oranda LLC** in 2010 after nearly 10 years of classroom teaching and more than 10 additional years of teaching future teachers and directing intern, induction and university teacher preparation programs.

Over the course of my career, I have visited 100s of classrooms where I experienced stressed-out teachers and students, disengaged students, and discouraged teachers.

I was compelled to create a tool that would support a positive and productive culture and climate for learning. I started **Oranda** with that tool, released in 2010 under the name **recessitate**.

With my undergraduate studies at U.C. Davis in product development and consumer marketing, creating a toolkit to help teachers manage the energy in their classroom was a very exciting time for me. The following steps took me just under three years:

- Investigate existing products and their price points
- Research best 'energy-shifting' practices from the fields of mindfulness, occupational theory and neuroscience
- Create prototype mock cards out of construction paper
- Pilot mock cards with 65 fifth grade students in three different classrooms
- Take in all feedback from pilot and re-write cards in the words of the 5th graders
- Create a business plan map and project cash-flow
- Work with graphic designer to create a character, and design the cards, and toolkit box



- Write marketing copy
- Build e-commerce website
- Find and use a 'broker' to help with the manufacturing and shipping of 2500 units from China

-Network with mentors and those that have traveled the road before me - tribute to IAEE's Chuck Lavaroni and special thanks to Don Leisey!

-Find a storage and fulfillment location

-Copyright, trademark and get insurance

-Gather testimonials and images of kids using **recessitate** to upload on [Youtube](#)

-Get booths at conventions targeting my market and sell! Sell! SELL!

Along with the above, I found distributors in Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the states. I sold all 2500 **recessitate** boxes in five continents in less than two years.

After selling all of my inventory and attempting to crowdsource for my next manufacturing run, I opted to offer a PDF downloadable version. Then, in 2015, I figured out a way to 'print-on-demand' and **recessitate** was rebranded as **Focus 1-2-3** to communicate the results and simplicity of using the product.

Oranda has come a long way since its beginnings in 2010 as a product company. I'm now **Oranda Consulting** and have moved in the direction of coaching, training, career development, and entrepreneur acceleration with the same goals of propelling others and organizations forward toward the best possible versions of themselves.

IAEE: What were some of the forces that encouraged you to develop and market your ideas?



RB: The name of my business, **Oranda** was inspired by the proverb about teaching others to fish.

The 'oranda' fish is a curious and common goldfish with a brainy-like mass on the top of its head. Orandas thrive under the best conditions. **Just like us!**

In my role as a teacher educator, I worked with the California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program. At first, I was a new teacher coach, then I moved into an administrator role while earning my principal and administrator credentials. BTSA and the other new teacher intern programs I managed were grant funded by the state to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. There continues to be a significant number of educators that leave the profession within five years.

The problem to solve: "How do we keep teachers in the profession?" In my observations, this inquiry morphed to "How to help teachers and students enjoy school together?" and "How can teachers work with the natural energy shifts and needs of all their students throughout the day?" or "How can teachers harness the energy of students for good to create positive, healthy classrooms?"

In the early 2000s, there were many great classroom management trainings available for teachers. But in my research, I did not find any tools that I liked or were easy to use that managed the energy and mindsets for learning. There were just whispers about Social Emotional Learning and teaching self-awareness and self-management. It was the beginning of the 'brain break' era.

Literally, after training teachers in 100s of classrooms where the teachers were struggling and the students were too, I felt an urgency to get a tool out to my colleagues that they would love yesterday! There was a fire in my belly!

IAEE: What/who do you recognize as encouraging you to pursue your ideas?

RB: There were many mentors and great minds that came before me and paved the way. I was influenced by my own experience as a new teacher in the first BTSA cohort in Sacramento County, California. In this consortia, the human resource director of Folsom-Cordova Unified School District, Barbara Shinn, and the first BTSA Director in California, Margaret Olebe both had visions for teacher professional development and fostering a growth mindset in both beginning and veteran teachers. In my first two years as a classroom teacher, they introduced me to other edupreneurs, such as Rick Morris with New Management, Rick Smith with Conscious Teaching, and Art Costa with *Habits of Mind*, for example.

My path from educator to educational leader to educational entrepreneur was for me, a natural progression.

The idea to pursue my product, **Focus 1-2-3** came directly from the teachers I worked with on a daily basis in my work as a new teacher coach. I saw a need, told them about my idea and they said they would use it and they did and do!

I owe a huge debt of gratitude towards and my biggest thanks goes towards my spouse, children, and teacher-parents who encouraged me to reach for my stars.

IAEE: What were some of the money issues you encountered in establishing your business and how did you resolve them?

RB: When it comes to developing a product there are different costs than with companies that provide services. Back in 2010, I needed a little 'nest egg' in advance to pay for the initial order of 2500 toolkits. There was not a lot of cash left for marketing and other expenses after that. Tradeshows are also expensive, especially for a one-product company.

Here are some work-a-rounds that I found helped resolve cash-flow. First, I tried to crowdsource to fund the next run of **Focus 1-2-3**. Crowdsourcing was fairly new and did not result in the dollar amount I needed for another manufacturing run. In the meantime, I sold the product in the form of a downloadable PDF and soon found a way to repackage **Focus 1-**

2-3 that allowed for 'print-on-demand' AND also saved me a lot of money on housing inventory in a warehouse fulfillment center.

I choose tradeshow very selectively AND shared booths with companies with similar goals, such as [Wiselnside](#). This partnering was a money saver.

Further, the road to entrepreneurialism has included many additional employment gigs, as well. There has always been ways to earn income outside of my business.

IAEE: How did you advertise, market and grow your business?

RB: As I mentioned above, I did attend some strategic tradeshow that provided me with direct contact with my target market: school district leaders, private national preschool franchises and educational supply companies. These tradeshow connections resulted in my largest orders.

For small orders of onesies to a couple of dozen, my sales came from my comments on other people's blogs where I introduced **Focus 1-2-3** to solve classroom management challenges, create positive climates for learning, meet the social-emotional learning needs of kids, provide sensory processing support by building self-awareness and self-management strategies, for example. On my website, I incorporated Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategies with these same key words and topics.

I also reached out and networked via phone, email or LinkedIn to any person or company that was like-minded to determine if there may be some synergy between us and how we might benefit from a mutual agreement.

These efforts resulted in multiple distributors and life-long friendships.

As my business has grown more in the direction of consulting, I find that networking with regular follow-up has provided me with the most work.

IAEE: How did your experience and preparation as an educator assist you in your entrepreneurial efforts?

RB: My entrepreneurial tendencies were groomed during my years as a classroom teacher. I was consistently challenged to be inventive and to innovate to meet the needs of and bring out the best in all my students. Each class required tweaks to any systems in place and each lesson provided new opportunities to adapt and adjust. There are many parallels in the worlds of an educator and entrepreneur with innovation, creativity and flexibility.

Early on in my teacher preparation, I was introduced to this quote which continues to influence me:



"I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration, I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or de-humanized. If we treat people as who they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming."

- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749-1832)



Goethe was the first to introduce me, in his own way, to the idea of **Social Emotional Learning Competencies** found in this image from the Collaborative of Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL).

I became compelled and continue to be compelled to provide services, ideas and resources that support the social and emotional well-being in each of us.

IAEE: What problems, challenges and rewards have you experienced from your own business?

RB: One problem, was with a sales representative that I spent months grooming and onboarding. I invested much time and energy with this person and he had no sales and soon went in another career direction. That was a disappointment.

Challenges for me have always been with the expectations of how long things will take and the projection of sales. Things have always taken longer than I expected.

The most rewarding part of owning my own business is hearing from customers and clients about their success. In truth, their success is my success. The other rewards I have experienced

is the great sense of accomplishment I feel, being my own boss, as well as meeting so many other entrepreneurial educators with similar goals of supporting all teachers and learners.

Being an entrepreneur has also gotten me off 'the bell schedule.'" I have more flexibility with my time, which has meant more time with my kids and family.

Every day is a new challenge with a world of possibilities!

IAEE: What personal rewards received as an educator did you forfeit when you became an educational entrepreneur?

RB: I miss several things. I miss being around kids. They keep you current and on your toes. Classroom and kid stories make entertaining dinner conversations. I miss the collaboration with teachers in lesson and project planning, as well as the collaboration with educational leaders rolling out programs and practices that support teachers and learners. I miss being a part of an integrated team.

IAEE: How do you see your business contributing to positive changes in education and society as a whole?

RB: I envision a world where everyone is fulfilled in their work by contributing in a way that maximizes their strengths and assets, where their colleagues understand, appreciate and leverage their unique talents and gifts. I envision a world where every child is seen and heard and recognized for their own aptitudes and interests and encouraged to embrace who they are and maximize their abilities and contributions. I envision a world where all people are highly skilled in their social-emotional competencies, where kindness lives in and outside of schools and the workplace.

I see my work contributing to this by providing services and resources that support this potential and possibility in each of us. My work focuses on our strengths and building upon those strengths. Through this awareness of our strengths, we can better self-manage and communicate with others about our needs. The more we know about ourselves, the better partner we can be and the better relationships we can have with others at home, in the workplace and in the world.

"I think self-awareness is probably the most important thing towards being a champion."

-Billie Jean King



To be self-aware is to be a champion for oneself!

IAEE: What other entrepreneurial experiences are you currently or have been engaged in?

RB: I have a growth mindset and continue with my own professional development. Recently, I finished a certificate training program in Global Career Development Facilitation, which has allowed me to expand into career coaching for individuals and professionals outside of a school setting. In addition, I completed mediation training to add to my menu of services resolving conflicts in the workplace and educational settings.

To further expand my perspective as an entrepreneur, I attended Start-up Week 2017 here in Fort Collins, CO, where 40 individuals self-selected to work on 10 different entrepreneurial ideas from concept to prototype and pitch to a panel of judges within 48 hours. My team pitched a "Happiness" tracker application. I gained new insight into ideation and the product development process in my team that had just met.

With the focus on career development and self-awareness for career and postsecondary success, I have been networking with thought leaders who are now partnering with me to elevate their work through the refinement of their own career development and innovation tools.

Some of these small businesses include: Creating Purpose, Rich Feller and Associates, Strategic Advancement, Griggs Achievement, Pursuit Network, and Better World Organizations.

As well, I have been consulting for a collaborative effort between the Colorado Community College System and the Colorado Department of Education to expand Colorado's Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP), which is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities.

On occasion, I will speak at or lead a workshop at an educational conference, such as Share Fair Nation, the Colorado School Social Worker Association, the Colorado Association of Middle Level Education or Shape Colorado.

IAEE: How has your personal life been affected by your decision to become an educational entrepreneur?

RB: I would say that my personal life has been enriched by expanding my network and friendships beyond the school and educational community. I have made many new friends along the way. At home, my family continues to cheer me on. I have a very supportive husband and two amazing daughters. I do miss the social life I had with my co-worker teachers, lunches in the staff room, running together after school, and after hour socials. Teacher-friends are the best!

IAEE: Why do you feel your business has been so successful?

RB: My business has been successful because I know my audience and listened to them to provide a product and services that improve the quality of their lives and solve problems that are real to them. I have taken the advice from my mentors to not spend anything if I don't have to. My business has also been successful because I am nimble and flexible and continue to listen, learn and adapt.

"Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature's inexorable imperative."

- H. G. Wells



IAEE: What advice to you have for educators considering becoming an educational entrepreneur?

RB: The advice I have if educators are considering becoming an educational entrepreneur:

- Do your market research.
- Talk to people that will champion your work and those that won't.
- Ask lots of questions directed towards other edupreneurs doing similar work.
- Don't quit your day job right away.
- It is o.k. if you need to weave in and out of employment too.
- Get a second or third read for a reality check on your cash flow projections, business plan or business map.
- Don't spend any money that you don't have to. There are many free or economical ways to get started.
- Ask yourself how you want to be spending your time and create work that helps you do that.
- Take advantage of free business coaching from your local small business association or organizations like SCORE.
- Shift your perspective from competition to collaboration. There is room for the success of all products and services. Befriend your fellow edupreneurs!
- Stay current and involved.
- Enjoy the ride! And, just like the Oranda fish, keep swimming!

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

-Howard Thurman

