

# ASU Startup School in Mesa builds business skills — for free

Matt Faye, Special for The Republic | [azcentral.com](http://azcentral.com) 5:04 a.m. MST February 23, 2016



(Photo: Matt Faye)

Heidi Aldrich teaches at Desert Ridge High School in Mesa, but the aspiring entrepreneur will soon hit the books herself as she prepares to venture back into the business world.

Arizona State Entrepreneurship + Innovation has partnered with Mesa THINKspot to offer the ASU Startup School, a free training course where entrepreneurs can learn the ins and outs of developing a business.

Aldrich is among those who have already signed up.

“This is right up my alley”, said Aldrich, 37, who has worked in sales in addition to teaching. “I’ve found all these things that I love to do, now I’m having a hard time determining which one would be the best to

pursue.”

The ASU Startup School will consist of online course materials, paired with a weekly series of five workshops beginning March 1. Faculty from the East Valley Entrepreneurial Center at Mesa Community College will teach the evening workshops.

Sally Harrison, president and CEO of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, said the school will give entrepreneurs a leg up.

**MORE:** [How to keep smart people in Phoenix \(/story/opinion/op-ed/2016/02/22/arizona-innovation-asu/80309500/\)](http://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2016/02/22/arizona-innovation-asu/80309500/)

## From entrepreneurial thinking to the business nitty gritty

For Aldrich, the training course offers a way to hone her skills. The University of Arizona graduate earned an MBA before beginning her teaching career in 2002. Since then, she has continued to stay active in the business community, doing sales for companies such as Mary Kay Cosmetics and Intuit Inc. out of Tucson.

This time, Aldrich is looking to go out on her own. She plans to focus her business largely on health, fitness and anti-aging products, and hopes the course will acquaint her with how the business world works today.

“I want to sort of refresh my skills and look at things from more of an entrepreneurial type of perspective,” Aldrich said. “Hopefully I can come out of it knowing more about what the market looks like today and in the future.”

The course is divided into two sections or stages. Stage one will introduce entrepreneurial thinking and stage two, which begins on April 7, will get into the “nitty gritty” of business, Mesa THINKspot Coordinator Sandy Rizzo said.

While the classes for entrepreneurs will help people develop successful business ventures, Rizzo said that the overall goal is to get participants in the mindset to succeed.

Those who complete all sessions in the start-up school will be eligible for entry into the MCC Entrepreneurship Certificate program, with one of the introductory courses waived.

No matter where the start-up school takes her, Aldrich said she’s just trying to keep all her options open.

“I still love teaching,” Aldrich said, but she wants to do her homework on what it takes to become an entrepreneur.

“I don’t know where my journey will take me; right now I’m just trying to make sure that I love it,” she said.

### ASU Startup School at a glance:

**When:** 6 to 7:30 p.m. starting March 1.

**Where:** THINKspot, 635 N. Power Road, Mesa.

Cost: Free.

To register: [www.mesathinkspot.tumblr.com/ASUstartup](http://www.mesathinkspot.tumblr.com/ASUstartup) (<http://www.mesathinkspot.tumblr.com/ASUstartup>)

## 7 other ASU innovation partnerships + successes

Read or Share this story: <http://azc.cc/1TCFZwH>

