

IMPACT ENTREPRENEUR · EDUCATOR RESOURCES

THE IMPACT ENTREPRENEUR BREAKTHROUGH

A Field Manual for the Regenerative Economy

Instructor's Supplement

Syllabi, Discussion Questions, Assignments, and Assessment Tools
for Course Adoption and Classroom Use

By Laurie Lane-Zucker

*A resource for professors, instructors, and program directors adopting The
Impact Entrepreneur Breakthrough for classroom or workshop use.*

A Note to Instructors

Thank you for considering *The Impact Entrepreneur Breakthrough* for your course. This Supplement is designed to make adoption as easy as possible—doing the pedagogical translation work so you can focus on teaching.

The book covers substantial terrain: enterprise design, ownership structures, capital alignment, security reframing, cultural infrastructure, and civilizational renewal. It integrates personal narrative with analytical frameworks, and each of its sixteen chapters concludes with a practical toolkit. This creates rich material for classroom discussion, applied projects, and critical analysis—but it also means instructors need guidance on how to sequence, select, and assess.

This Supplement provides that guidance through five sections:

Section A: Course Integration Models — three complete syllabi at different intensities, from full-semester courses to executive education workshops.

Section B: Discussion Questions by Chapter — three to five substantive questions per chapter with facilitator notes on productive tensions and common student responses.

Section C: Assignment Ideas — individual, group, and capstone projects grounded in the book's actual frameworks and toolkits. Each includes a simplified alternative for courses where students are encountering these concepts for the first time.

Section D: Assessment Rubrics — sample rubrics for evaluating systemic thinking, framework application, and integration across domains.

Section E: Guest Lecture and Author Engagement — information on booking Laurie Lane-Zucker for virtual class visits, with detailed session structures and time breakdowns.

The book's structure operates on three interconnected layers—Cultural Foundation (Part IV), Economic Architecture (Parts I–II), and Systemic Infrastructure (Part III)—with Part V integrating all three. This architecture is pedagogically powerful: it allows you to organize courses around different entry points depending on your discipline and student population.

A Note on Instructor Preparation

Effective teaching of this material requires more than familiarity with the book's content. Instructors will benefit from some grounding in systems thinking as an analytical framework (Donella Meadows' *Thinking in Systems* is a useful primer), alignment with the view that current sustainability, CSR, and responsible business approaches have not yet provided an adequate framework for addressing civilizational-scale challenges, and comfort facilitating discussions that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries.

You do not need to be an expert in every domain the book covers—no one is. The book's strength is its integration across domains, and the most productive classroom conversations often emerge when instructors model the process of thinking across boundaries rather than claiming mastery of each one. What matters most is a willingness to engage with complexity rather than simplify it away.

Suggested preparation: Before the course begins, consider assigning yourself (and optionally your teaching assistants) one companion reading alongside the book—Meadows' *Thinking in Systems* for analytical grounding, or Marjorie Kelly's *Ownership Revolution* for enterprise design context. This is not required, but instructors who have done so report greater confidence facilitating discussions in Parts II and III.

Companion Resources

This Supplement is part of a four-component ecosystem. The Reader's Companion provides framework summaries, a contextual glossary, and reading group questions suitable for students as a study aid. The Implementation Roadmap offers diagnostic tools for practitioners. The IE Platform Resource Hub at www.impactentrepreneur.com/breakthrough provides a living library of case studies, framework updates, and community features including a Course Adoption Registry.

I welcome feedback on these materials and am available to discuss course design with adopting instructors. Please reach out through the IE platform.

— Laurie Lane-Zucker, Sheffield, Massachusetts

Section A: Course Integration Models

The following three models represent different intensities of engagement with the book. Each is designed for a specific institutional context and includes weekly breakdowns, learning objectives, and suggested companion readings.

Model 1: Full Semester Course (15 Weeks)

Course Title: The Impact Entrepreneur: Enterprise Design, Systems Thinking, and Regenerative Practice

Suggested Departments: MBA/Business, Sustainability, Public Policy, Social Innovation, Environmental Studies

Prerequisites: None (introductory concepts are developed in Part I). Instructors may wish to assign the Reader's Companion as pre-course orientation for students unfamiliar with sustainability or systems thinking.

Primary Text: *The Impact Entrepreneur Breakthrough* by Laurie Lane-Zucker (Berrett-Koehler, 2026)

Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Distinguish impact entrepreneurship from social entrepreneurship, CSR, and ESG, and articulate why each distinction matters structurally.
- Understand the foundational framework for designing an impact-driven business, including how mission, ownership, capital structure, and governance interact from inception.
- Apply systemic intelligence to analyze enterprises, investment portfolios, and policy interventions across ecological, social, and economic dimensions simultaneously.
- Design or evaluate enterprise structures using the book's Enterprise Design Canvas, Ownership as Justice toolkit, and Capital Alignment Framework.
- Calculate a Prevention Dividend™ and Prevention Ratio™ for a proposed policy or institutional intervention.
- Identify and analyze both negative and positive externalities—understanding not only the hidden costs of extractive models but also the cascading benefits generated by regenerative enterprises and preventive infrastructure.
- Analyze the cultural infrastructure—narrative, attention, identity—required for technical and structural innovations to endure.
- Produce an integrated impact enterprise proposal or policy brief that addresses economic, systemic, and cultural dimensions.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
1	Why Impact Entrepreneurs?	Introduction + Ch. 1	In-class discussion (30 min): Map your own “impact identity.” Where do you sit on the spectrum from conventional to regenerative? Followed by pair-share (15 min).
2	Systemic Intelligence	Ch. 2	Case analysis (take-home essay, 2–3 pages): Apply systemic vs. single-bottom-line thinking to a specific product supply chain (e.g., a cotton t-shirt or smartphone). Trace how fixing one visible problem may displace harm elsewhere.
Week	Topic	Reading	

			Key Activity / Assignment
3	Enterprises That Heal	Ch. 3	In-class workshop (45 min): Use the Enterprise Design Canvas to evaluate a real B Corp (see B Corp Directory at bcorporation.net). Take-home reflection paper (3–5 pages) due Week 4.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
4	Ownership as Justice	Ch. 4	In-class debate (40 min): Steward ownership vs. conventional equity. Use Ch. 4's nine-step toolkit as the analytical frame. Instructor assigns roles.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
5	Capital as Custodian	Ch. 5	Guest speaker (virtual) OR take-home case analysis (3–5 pages): Interview an impact investor OR analyze a fund's structure using the Capital Alignment Framework.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
6	Markets That Reflect What Matters	Ch. 6	Group project launch (in-class, 50 min): True-cost accounting exercise for a selected product —trace the full ecological and social costs embedded in one item. Identify both negative externalities (hidden costs borne by others) and positive externalities (cascading benefits of regenerative alternatives). What would the real price be?

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
7	Midterm Synthesis	Review Parts I–II	MIDTERM (take-home, 5–7 pages): Integrated enterprise design proposal. Select a real organization (B Corps recommended for transparency of data) and apply at least three frameworks from Chs. 1–6 to propose specific structural improvements.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
8	The Misallocation of Defense	Ch. 7	In-class exercise (40 min): Five Pillars Assessment—rate your

community on each pillar (1–10 scale) with supporting evidence. Calculate your Prevention Ratio™. Pair discussion: Why does reactive spending dominate?

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
9	Who Really Keeps Us Safe / Mutualism	Chs. 8–9	In-class stakeholder mapping (30 min, groups of 3–4): Identify the “invisible security providers” in a community—nurses, teachers, watershed managers, community organizers. Followed by Costa Rica case discussion (20 min).

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
10	Defense as a Service	Ch. 10	Group presentations (50 min): “Defense Audit” of a real organization or municipality using the DaaS framework. Groups of 3–4, 10-minute presentations with 5-minute Q&A.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
11	Culture as Infrastructure	Ch. 11	In-class workshop (40 min): Apply the Culture Triage framework (Ch. 11 toolkit) to an organization a team member knows. Simplified option: Analyze a single cultural dimension (values, practices, or narratives) rather than the full triage.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
12	Stories and Attention	Chs. 12–13	Two-part exercise: (1) Personal attention audit (take-home, one week of tracking). (2) In-class narrative strategy exercise (30 min): Choose a current policy debate—such as carbon pricing, universal basic income, or land use reform—and identify the competing narratives. Which narrative is winning, and why?

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
13	Identity and the Whole	Ch. 14	Reflective essay (take-home, 3–4 pages): “The fractured self vs. interdependent identity” in

your own professional or organizational experience. How does identity shape what institutions are capable of doing?

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
14	Reclamation	Chs. 15–16 + Breakthrough	In-class commons mapping (45 min, groups of 3–4): Identify a commons in your community, map key stakeholders (including voiceless ones—future generations, non-human species). Propose three governance principles. Full governance design reserved for capstone.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity / Assignment
15	Capstone Presentations	—	CAPSTONE: Full impact enterprise design OR policy brief using DaaS framework. 15-minute presentations with peer evaluation.

Instructor insight: B Corps make ideal case material throughout this course because their impact reports, governance documents, and B Impact Assessment data are publicly available, making student analysis more rigorous and **evidence-based**. The B Corp Directory (bcorporation.net) is a ready-made case library.

Suggested Companion Readings

Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics* (2017)—pairs with Ch. 6. Marjorie Kelly, *Ownership Revolution* (2012)—pairs with Ch. 4. Donella Meadows, *Thinking in Systems* (2008)—pairs with Ch. 2. Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons* (1990)—pairs with Ch. 15. Adrienne Maree Brown, *Emergent Strategy* (2017)—pairs with Ch. 14.

Model 2: Module Integration (6 Weeks)

Context: A 4–6 week module within an existing sustainability, entrepreneurship, public policy, or finance course. Assumes students have foundational knowledge in the host discipline.

Suggested Title: From Extraction to Regeneration: Frameworks for the Impact Economy

Module Learning Objectives

- Analyze the structural differences between extractive and regenerative enterprise models.
- Apply at least two of the book's diagnostic frameworks to a real-world case—ideally a B Corp or other enterprise with publicly available impact data.
- Evaluate the cultural and systemic conditions under which structural innovations succeed or fail.
- Identify both negative and positive externalities in enterprise operations and propose structural interventions that generate cascading benefits.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity
1	The Impact Economy	Intro + Chs. 1–2	In-class discussion (30 min): What distinguishes impact entrepreneurship from adjacent

categories? Systemic intelligence exercise (20 min): Apply systemic vs. single-issue thinking to a product the class chooses together.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity
2	Enterprise Architecture	Chs. 3–4	In-class workshop (45 min): Enterprise Design Canvas applied to a B Corp. Homework: Ownership structure comparison (2–3 pages)—compare two organizations with different ownership models.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity
3	Capital and Markets	Chs. 5–6	Take-home case analysis (3–5 pages): Evaluate an impact fund using the Capital Alignment Framework OR conduct a true-cost accounting exercise for a single product, identifying both hidden costs and potential positive externalities.

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity
4	Security Reframed	Chs. 7 + 10	In-class exercise (40 min): Prevention Ratio™ calculation applied to a specific municipal budget line item or institutional spending category. Discussion (20 min): What would a DaaS approach look like in this context?

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity
5	Cultural Infrastructure	Chs. 11–12 + 14	In-class narrative reframing exercise (30 min): Select a current debate (e.g., housing policy, energy transition, healthcare access) and map the dominant narratives on each side. Identity reflection (take-home, 2–3 pages): How does the “fractured self” show up in business or organizational life?

Week	Topic	Reading	Key Activity
6	Integration + Presentations	Chs. 15–16	Module capstone (in-class presentations, 10 min each): Enterprise analysis and improvement proposal OR policy brief. Peer feedback.

Adaptation Notes

For MBA programs, emphasize Parts I–II (enterprise, ownership, capital) and Ch. 10 (DaaS). For public policy, emphasize Part III and Ch. 6. For environmental studies, emphasize the three-layer framework and Part IV. For social work or community development, emphasize Chs. 4, 8, 15.

Instructor insight: *Designing a regenerative business requires more mastery than a 6-week module can deliver. Frame this module as building analytical capacity—the ability to evaluate and improve existing enterprises—rather than designing new ones from scratch. Reserve full enterprise design for the 15-week course or capstone projects where students have sufficient time to develop depth.*

Model 3: Executive Education Intensive (2–3 Days)

Context: A concentrated workshop for working professionals—executives, investors, nonprofit leaders, policy advisors. Assumes participants bring professional experience but may not have academic background in sustainability or impact.

Suggested Title: Building the Impact Economy: A Leadership Intensive

Day-by-Day Schedule

Session	Focus	Reading (Pre-Work)	Activities
Day 1 AM	Foundations + Enterprise	Intro, Chs. 1–3	Opening keynote by Laurie Lane-Zucker (45 min): Why Impact Entrepreneurs? Framing the three-layer model and the case for structural transformation. Followed by Enterprise Design Canvas workshop (60 min): Participants apply the Canvas to a real B Corp, working in groups of 4–5.

Session	Focus	Reading (Pre-Work)	Activities
Day 1 PM	Ownership + Capital	Chs. 4–5	Ownership structure assessment (60 min): Participants analyze the ownership structure of their own organizations using Ch. 4's nine-step toolkit—or, for those in non-ownership roles, a selected B Corp. Capital alignment mapping exercise (45 min): Where does your organization's capital come from, and what values does that capital carry?

Session	Focus	Reading (Pre-Work)	Activities
Day 2 AM	Security + Prevention	Chs. 7, 10	Prevention Ratio™ diagnostic (60 min): Applied to participants' own sectors or organizations. What proportion of your security-related spending is reactive vs. preventive? DaaS brainstorm (45 min): What would Defense as a Service look like in your specific context?

Session	Focus	Reading (Pre-Work)	Activities
Day 2 PM	Culture + Story + Integration	Chs. 11–12, 14	Culture audit of participants' organizations (45 min): Using the Culture Triage framework from Ch. 11, assess one dimension (values, practices, or narratives) in your organization. Narrative strategy exercise (30 min): What story does your sector need to tell to enable structural change?

Session	Focus	Reading (Pre-Work)	Activities
Day 3 AM	Reclamation + Action	Chs. 15–16, Breakthrough	Commons mapping (45 min): Identify a commons relevant to your work and map its stakeholders. Personal action plan (60 min): Design a 90-day implementation sprint targeting one layer (cultural, economic, or systemic) in your own context.

Session	Focus	Reading (Pre-Work)	Activities
Day 3 PM	Presentations + Closing	—	Participants present 90-day plans (5 min each). Peer feedback. Closing reflection led by author: The monarch butterfly metaphor—multigenerational commitment to transformation.

Pre-Work Guidance

For the executive intensive, assign the full book as pre-reading (4–6 weeks before). Provide the Reader's Companion as a navigation aid. Ask participants to complete the Entry Point Diagnostic from the Implementation Roadmap before Day 1, so they arrive knowing their “layer” priority (cultural, economic, systemic) and relevant reader pathway.

Section B: Discussion Questions by Chapter

The following questions are designed for classroom discussion, seminar conversation, or adapted as written reflection prompts. Each chapter includes three to five questions organized by cognitive level: Comprehension (what does the author argue?), Application (how does this connect to real contexts?), and Critical Analysis (where are the tensions, gaps, or productive disagreements?). Facilitator notes highlight common student responses and productive tensions to surface.

Strong discussions typically move from comprehension through application to analysis. For shorter class sessions, select one question from each level.

Introduction: Why Impact Entrepreneurs? + Chapter 1

1. The author distinguishes “impact entrepreneurs” from social entrepreneurs, CSR practitioners, and sustainability consultants. What are the key structural distinctions? Do you find them persuasive, or do these categories overlap more than the book suggests?

Facilitator*** note: ****Students often initially resist the distinctions as academic. Push them to identify concrete structural differences—what is different about how an impact enterprise is built vs. how a CSR program is added? The key is structural integration vs. bolt-on.*

2. The book argues that impact entrepreneurs represent “not a niche, but a necessary evolution” in economic life. What evidence would convince a skeptic that this is an evolution rather than a trend?

Facilitator*** note: ****This surfaces the tension between optimism and evidence. Challenge students to cite specific data or examples—not just aspiration.*

3. The “polycrisis” framing presents multiple systems failures compounding simultaneously. Is this framing energizing or paralyzing? What does the author do to prevent paralysis?

Facilitator*** note: ****Good entry point for discussing how activists and scholars handle scale anxiety. The book’s answer is systemic intelligence—the cognitive capacity to hold complexity without collapsing into single-issue thinking.*

Chapter 2: From Single-Bottom-Line to Systemic Intelligence

1. The chapter opens with the clothing industry child labor case. What does this example reveal about the limits of “single-issue” problem-solving? Can you identify a similar pattern in another industry or product?

Facilitator*** note: ****The key insight is that fixing one visible symptom while ignoring the system often displaces harm rather than eliminating it. Students from business backgrounds sometimes push back—push them to name what was structurally unchanged. Focusing on a specific product rather than an entire industry makes this exercise more tractable.*

2. Systemic intelligence is presented as a cultivable cognitive capacity, not an innate trait. Do you agree? What practices or educational approaches might develop it?
3. In your own work or organization, where do you see systemic thinking operating, and where does single-bottom-line logic still dominate? What maintains the single-bottom-line default?

Facilitator*** note: ****This question works especially well in executive education settings where participants bring real organizational experience. For students without professional experience, reframe around their university or a student organization.*

Chapter 3: Enterprises That Heal: Design for Regeneration

1. The chapter distinguishes “less bad” enterprises from those that are genuinely regenerative. Think of an organization you know: which category does it fall into? What would crossing the threshold from “less bad” to “healing” require?

Facilitator*** note: ****Most students can readily identify “less bad” organizations but struggle with what regenerative **actually looks** like in practice. That struggle is pedagogically productive. B Corps are particularly useful cases here because their B Impact Assessment scores are public, providing concrete data for analysis.*

2. The Enterprise Design Canvas asks whether your enterprise would make the world healthier if it multiplied 100-fold. Apply this test to a specific company. What does the answer reveal?
3. Can a publicly traded corporation with dispersed shareholders ever be a “healing enterprise,” or does the ownership structure prevent it? What structural constraints matter most?

Facilitator*** note: ****This is a bridge question to Chapter 4 (ownership). Students may disagree sharply—that disagreement is the

point.*

Chapter 4: Ownership as Justice

1. The author writes that “how we own determines what we value.” Do you agree? Can you identify cases where ownership structure constrained mission, or where it enabled mission in ways other structures could not?
2. Mission-lock provisions protect purpose from future compromise—but they also limit adaptability. Is permanent mission protection always desirable? When might it become a liability?

Facilitator*** note: ****This tension is real and students should sit with it. There’s no clean answer—the question is about which risks you’re willing to take.*

3. The chapter traces ownership from feudal Europe through colonialism to modern abstracted capital. How does this historical framing change how you think about current ownership debates (housing, data, intellectual property)?

Facilitator*** note: ****Especially productive for students who haven’t previously connected ownership to justice. The historical arc can be eye-opening.*

Chapter 5: Capital as Custodian

1. The metaphor of capital as “lifeblood”—never neutral, flowing according to the architecture of the system—is central to this chapter. How does this reframing differ from conventional views of capital as an efficient, impersonal force?
2. Does “custodial capital” feel like a realistic aspiration or an ideal? What institutional forces work against patient, mission-aligned capital, and what forces are beginning to support it?

Facilitator*** note: ****Students in finance-adjacent programs may be skeptical. Push them to engage with the structural barriers, not just dismiss the aspiration.*

3. Impact investing has grown to over \$1.5 trillion globally. What is the difference between genuine custodial capital and impact-washing? How would you begin to develop criteria to distinguish them?

Facilitator*** note: ****Developing full diagnostic criteria is a complex undertaking—frame this as an exploratory exercise, not a finished product. Students should identify 3–5 key indicators rather than attempting a comprehensive diagnostic. The struggle to identify indicators is itself the learning.*

Chapter 6: Markets That Reflect What Matters

1. True-cost accounting internalizes externalities—making the full ecological and social costs visible in prices. What would this look like for a specific product you use regularly? Who benefits from the current system of externalized costs, and who bears them? Consider both directions: what negative externalities are hidden, and what positive externalities go unrewarded?

Facilitator*** note: ****The introduction of positive externalities—cascading benefits that regenerative enterprises generate but are not compensated for—is essential here. Students often focus only on harm; push them to also identify the uncompensated goods that impact enterprises produce.*

2. The chapter argues that markets are not natural phenomena but designed systems reflecting embedded values. If you could redesign one market rule or regulation, which would you change and why?
3. Carbon pricing is one of the most debated policy interventions in sustainability. Using the book’s framework, what would a “systemically intelligent” approach to carbon pricing include that most current proposals miss?

Facilitator*** note: ****Look for students who can connect this to Part IV’s argument about cultural infrastructure—pricing mechanisms that lack narrative and cultural support often fail politically.*

Chapter 7: The Misallocation of Defense

1. The chapter introduces the Five Pillars of Real Security and argues that global military spending—a record \$2.89 trillion in 2025—represents a massive misallocation. What is the core of this argument—is it moral, strategic, economic, or all three?

Facilitator*** note: ****Students may initially read this as pacifist ideology. Guide them to engage with the strategic and economic logic: the ROI data (\$4–\$7 per dollar for disaster preparedness, \$7–\$30 for ecosystem restoration) frames prevention as more cost-effective, not just morally preferable.*

2. Apply the Five Pillars framework to your community or region. Rate each pillar on a 1–10 scale. Where is the greatest vulnerability? What would strengthening that pillar by two points require?
3. The Prevention Ratio™ measures the proportion of security spending directed toward root-cause prevention versus symptom

reaction. Most institutions discover ratios of 80–90% reactive. Why does this pattern persist despite evidence that prevention generates better returns?

Facilitator*** note: ****This is one of the book's most productive critical questions. Students will discover structural, political, and cognitive explanations for why reactive spending dominates. That analysis is itself systemic intelligence in practice.*

Chapters 8–9: Who Really Keeps Us Safe / From Militarization to Mutualism

1. Chapter 8 reframes security providers as nurses, teachers, watershed managers, and community organizers rather than soldiers. Is this persuasive? What assumptions does it challenge, and does it overlook legitimate military security functions?

Facilitator*** note: ****Allow pushback. The most productive discussion acknowledges that both military and mutualist security functions exist—the question is the ratio and the logic of resource allocation.*

2. The Costa Rica case (Chapter 9)—a nation that abolished its military in 1948—is presented as evidence that mutualism works strategically. What are the limits of this example? Can it scale to larger or differently positioned nations?
3. Chapter 9 argues that “peace as a business model” generates better returns than militarization. Design a one-paragraph pitch for a “peace-as-a-service” enterprise. What would it do? Who would pay?

Facilitator*** note: ****This question bridges directly to Chapter 10's DaaS framework. It is useful to assign this before reading Chapter 10, then compare students' ideas with the author's model.*

Chapter 10: Defense as a Service: The Operating Model

1. DaaS applies cloud computing logic to security: shared infrastructure, continuous updates, distributed access. Is this analogy illuminating or does it obscure important differences between technology infrastructure and social/ecological security?
2. The three pillars of DaaS—Distributed Capacity, Preventive Infrastructure, Mutual Benefit Protocols—each address a different dimension. Which pillar is most immediately implementable in your context? Which faces the greatest political resistance?
3. Calculate a Prevention Dividend™ for a specific policy proposal: choose a concrete intervention (e.g., urban tree canopy expansion, community health worker program, renewable energy cooperative) and estimate the downstream costs it would prevent. What data would you need? What assumptions are you making?

Facilitator*** note: ****This is the chapter's signature analytical exercise. Students should struggle with estimation and assumptions—that struggle reveals how prevention accounting works and why it's underused.*

Chapters 11–12: The Culture We Keep Alive / The Stories That Shape the Possible

1. The author argues that when organizations fail despite good plans and resources, the problem is almost never the plan—it's the culture. Think of an organizational or business failure you've witnessed or studied: was culture the invisible variable?

Facilitator*** note: ****This question works best when students bring specific examples. The Culture Triage framework from Ch. 11's toolkit can be applied to their examples in real time. For **students without extensive professional experience, well-documented corporate cases (Wells Fargo, Boeing, WeWork) provide accessible material.*

2. “Before there is policy, there is narrative. Before there is a budget, there is a belief about what is worth funding.” (Ch. 12). Choose a current policy debate—such as the energy transition, housing affordability, healthcare access, or education funding—and identify: what narrative underpins each side? Which narrative is winning, and why?

Facilitator*** note: ****Suggesting specific debates helps students engage concretely rather than remaining abstract.*

3. The book identifies narrative as the deepest leverage point for systems change (drawing on Donella Meadows). Is this true? Or does structural change—ownership, capital, regulation—create the conditions for narrative shift rather than the reverse?

Facilitator*** note: ****This is the book's deepest tension: the relationship between structure and culture. The author argues they are co-dependent, but the question of sequencing is genuinely unresolved. Let students debate.*

Chapters 13–14: The Attention Commons / Identities That Remember the Whole

1. The “attention commons” concept frames collective cognitive capacity as shared infrastructure under siege from algorithmic capture. Perform a personal attention audit: where does your attention go in a typical day, and who benefits from that allocation?
2. Chapter 14 distinguishes the “fractured self”—identity organized around separation, scarcity, and competition—from “interdependent identity.” Is this a philosophical claim or a practical one? What would it mean concretely to design an organization based on interdependent identity—how would HR practices, governance, and incentive structures differ?

Facilitator*** note: ****Students in business programs may resist this as “too soft.” Push them: what would HR, governance, and incentive structures look like if identity were interdependent rather than individualistic? The practical implications are substantial.*

3. Part IV argues that culture, story, attention, and identity form a causal sequence. Is this really sequential, or circular, with each dimension influencing the others simultaneously? What are the pedagogical implications of each model?

Facilitator*** note: ****This is a meta-question about the book’s architecture. The author acknowledges circularity while arguing for a pedagogical sequence. Both are defensible.*

Chapters 15–16 + Breakthrough: Reclamation

1. Chapter 15 moves from “ownership” to “belonging” as an organizing principle. What is the practical difference? Can you identify a resource in your community that would benefit from this shift?
2. The monarch butterfly migration—multigenerational, no individual completing the route—serves as the closing metaphor. What does this imply about the kind of commitment the Impact Economy requires? Is this inspiring or daunting?

Facilitator*** note: ****This is a powerful closing discussion question. Students may be moved or frustrated by the scale of commitment implied. Both responses are productive.*

3. Looking across the whole book: what single idea most challenged your thinking? What argument do you find least convincing, and how would you strengthen or revise it?
4. Does the book succeed as a “field manual”—a practical resource for practitioners? Where does it feel most actionable, and where does it remain at the level of vision? What would make it more useful to someone doing this work next Monday?

Facilitator*** note: ****This critical evaluation question is essential for any serious course. The book’s strengths and limitations are real, and students should engage both.*

Section C: Assignment Ideas

The following assignments are designed to move students from comprehension through application to integration. Each is grounded in the book's actual frameworks and toolkits. Instructors should adapt scope, length, and grading weight to their context.

A note on scaffolding: Each assignment below includes a simplified alternative for courses where students are encountering these frameworks for the first time or where time constraints limit depth. The simplified versions build the same analytical muscles at a more accessible scale—analyzing a product rather than an enterprise, evaluating one dimension rather than integrating several. Use the full version for advanced seminars and capstones; the simplified version for introductory courses and shorter modules.

Individual Assignments

1. Impact Identity Reflection (Weeks 1–2)

Length: 3–5 pages | **Chapters:** Introduction + 1–2 | **Format:** Take-home reflective essay

Using the book's distinction between impact entrepreneurs and adjacent categories (social entrepreneurs, CSR practitioners, ESG analysts, sustainability consultants), write a reflective essay positioning yourself on this spectrum. Where have you operated with systemic intelligence, and where with single-bottom-line logic? What would a shift toward the impact entrepreneur identity require in your current role? This assignment is diagnostic—it surfaces students' starting assumptions and can be revisited at course end.

Instructor insight: This is an accessible entry assignment that works well regardless of students' prior experience. No simplified alternative needed.

2. Enterprise Design Canvas Application (Week 3)

Length: 5–7 pages | **Chapters:** 3–4 | **Format:** Take-home analytical paper

Select a real enterprise (B Corps recommended for data transparency—see bcorporation.net). Apply the Enterprise Design Canvas from Chapter 3 and the Ownership as Justice toolkit from Chapter 4 to analyze its current structure. Then propose specific redesigns that would move it from “less bad” toward genuinely regenerative. Your proposal must address business model, ownership structure, and governance. Use the 100-fold multiplication test: if this enterprise scaled 100x, would the world be healthier?

Simplified alternative: Apply the Enterprise Design Canvas to a single product line within a B Corp rather than the whole enterprise. Focus on one dimension (business model OR ownership structure OR governance) rather than all three. Length: 3–4 pages.

3. Prevention Dividend™ Policy Brief (Weeks 8–10)

Length: 5–8 pages | **Chapters:** 7 + 10 | **Format:** Take-home policy brief

Choose a concrete policy intervention (e.g., community health worker expansion, urban watershed restoration, renewable energy cooperative, early childhood education investment). Calculate the Prevention Dividend™: estimate the downstream costs the intervention would prevent, compare with the cost of the intervention itself, and express the result as a ratio. Then calculate the current Prevention Ratio™ for the relevant institution or community—what proportion of related spending is currently reactive versus preventive? Your brief must state assumptions explicitly and identify what data you would need for a more rigorous analysis.

Simplified alternative: Instead of a full Prevention Dividend calculation, conduct a qualitative prevention analysis: identify 3–5 downstream costs that a chosen intervention would likely prevent, explain the causal logic for each, and estimate whether the intervention's cost would be offset. Focus on the reasoning rather than the numbers. Length: 3–5 pages.

4. Attention Audit and Narrative Strategy (Weeks 12–13)

Length: 4–6 pages | **Chapters:** 12–13 | **Format:** Two-part take-home: one week of tracking + analytical memo

Conduct a personal attention audit for one week, tracking where your cognitive resources go and who profits from that allocation (using the framework from Chapter 13). Then select a current policy debate or social issue—such as the energy transition, housing affordability, universal basic income, or land use reform—and identify the dominant narratives on each side (Chapter 12). Write a narrative strategy memo proposing how a regenerative narrative could be constructed, disseminated, and sustained. Your memo should address both content and infrastructure—not just what story to tell, but how to protect the attention required to hear it.

Simplified alternative: Complete the attention audit only (2–3 pages). Track your attention for three days rather than a week, and reflect on what the patterns reveal about whose interests your attention serves. Skip the narrative strategy memo.

Group Projects

1. Enterprise Analysis Project (Weeks 3–7)

Team size: 3–4 students | **Deliverable:** 10–15 page report + 15-minute presentation

Working in teams, select a real organization—preferably a B Corp or other enterprise with publicly available impact data. Conduct a comprehensive analysis using frameworks from Chapters 3–6: Enterprise Design Canvas, Ownership as Justice toolkit, Capital Alignment Framework, and true-cost accounting (including both negative and positive externalities). Deliver an improvement proposal that addresses all four dimensions. The proposal must include a realistic implementation timeline, identify likely resistance, and explain how cultural infrastructure (Part IV) would support the structural changes.

Simplified alternative: Analyze the enterprise using two frameworks rather than four. Focus on Enterprise Design Canvas + one **other** framework of the team's choosing. Report length: 7–10 pages.

Instructor insight: In practice, analyzing a complete enterprise is a significant undertaking. Consider having teams focus on a single product or service line within their chosen organization, using that as a lens into the broader enterprise structure. B Corps are particularly suitable because their impact data is transparent and publicly available.

2. Five Pillars Community Assessment (Weeks 8–10)

Team size: 3–5 students | **Deliverable:** 10-page assessment + class presentation

Apply the Five Pillars of Real Security (Chapter 7) to a specific community—your university's city, a partner community, or a selected municipality. Rate each pillar (1–10) with supporting evidence. Identify the weakest pillar and design a DaaS-informed intervention to strengthen it. Calculate the Prevention Dividend™ of your proposed intervention. Present findings to the class—and if possible, to a community stakeholder.

Simplified alternative: Rather than assessing all Five Pillars, select the two pillars most relevant to your chosen community. Rate those two with supporting evidence and propose one concrete intervention for the weaker pillar. Skip the Prevention Dividend calculation; instead, qualitatively describe 3–5 downstream benefits the intervention would generate. Report length: 5–7 pages.

3. Commons Governance Design (Weeks 14–15)

Team size: 3–4 students | **Deliverable:** Governance proposal + visual stakeholder map

Identify a commons in your community (ecological, knowledge, cultural, social, or digital) that is currently under-governed or threatened by enclosure. Using the toolkit from Chapter 15, map stakeholders (including voiceless ones—future generations, non-human species), and propose three to five governance principles drawing on Ostrom's design principles and the book's framework.

Simplified alternative: Identify the commons and create the stakeholder map only. Rather than designing full governance rules, write a 2-page memo identifying the three most pressing governance challenges and proposing one principle to address each. Full governance design is reserved for the capstone.

Instructor insight: Designing governance structures is genuinely complex—even experienced professionals struggle with it. The simplified version (identifying a **commons**, mapping stakeholders, proposing initial principles) builds the analytical capacity without requiring the institutional design expertise that most students lack.

Capstone Options

Option A: Full Impact Enterprise Design

Length: 20–25 pages | Integrates all five Parts

Design a complete impact enterprise from the ground up. Your proposal must address enterprise model (Ch. 3), ownership structure (Ch. 4), capital strategy (Ch. 5), market positioning (Ch. 6), security and resilience strategy (Part III), and cultural strategy (Part IV). It must demonstrate how these elements integrate—using the book's three-layer framework (economic architecture + systemic infrastructure + cultural foundation). Include an implementation timeline and explicitly identify which layer is weakest and why.

Option B: DaaS Policy Brief

Length: 15–20 pages | Integrates Parts I, III, IV

Write a policy brief proposing a Defense as a Service™ implementation for a specific context (municipality, region, sector, or institution). Your brief must address all three DaaS pillars (Distributed Capacity, Preventive Infrastructure, Mutual Benefit Protocols), include Prevention Dividend™ calculations for at least two proposed interventions, identify the cultural conditions required for implementation (Part IV), and propose governance structures. This option is particularly suited for students in public policy, urban planning, or security studies programs.

Option C: Critical Analysis Essay

Length: 15–18 pages | Engages the full book

Write a scholarly analysis of the book's central argument—that building a regenerative economy requires integrating economic architecture, systemic infrastructure, and cultural foundation. Engage critically: where is the argument strongest? Where does it overreach? What evidence would strengthen or weaken its claims? You may draw on other literature (Raworth, Meadows, Ostrom, Kelly, or others) to develop your critique. This option is suited for students in academic programs who may pursue research in this area.

Instructor insight: *The capstone options require deep experience to evaluate effectively. Consider using the Systemic Thinking Assessment rubric (Section D) as the primary grading **tool**, and invite a second reader—a colleague from another discipline, or the author via a virtual session—to provide feedback on one or two standout projects. This distributes the evaluative burden and enriches the learning.*

Section D: Assessment Rubrics

Assessing work that engages systemic thinking requires rubrics that value integration, nuance, and the ability to hold complexity—not just technical accuracy or writing quality alone. The following rubrics are designed for the major assignment types. Adapt point values and weighting to your grading system.

Rubric 1: Systemic Thinking Assessment

Use this rubric for any assignment requiring analysis of complex, multi-dimensional problems (enterprise analyses, community assessments, policy briefs).

Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Systems Scope	Addresses all three layers (economic, systemic, cultural) with genuine integration—not just listing each.	Addresses at least two layers with some connection between them.	Focuses on one layer or lists multiple without connecting them.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Framework Application	Applies book frameworks accurately and with critical insight, adapting them to specific contexts.	Applies frameworks correctly but with limited adaptation to context.	Misapplies frameworks or applies them superficially without engaging specifics.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Evidence and Rigor	Uses concrete data, specific examples, and explicit assumptions. Acknowledges limitations.	Provides some evidence and examples. Assumptions mostly stated.	Claims unsupported by evidence. Assumptions unstated or unexamined.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Critical Analysis	Identifies genuine tensions, tradeoffs, and limitations—including in the book's own arguments.	Identifies some tensions. Engages critically but may accept book arguments uncritically.	Purely descriptive. No critical engagement with tensions or limitations.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Integration	Shows how elements reinforce or undermine each other. Demonstrates systemic intelligence.	Some connections between elements, but analysis remains somewhat siloed.	Elements treated independently without integration.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Practicability	Proposals are implementable, with realistic timelines, resource requirements, and resistance identified.	Proposals are plausible but implementation details are thin.	Proposals are aspirational without clear implementation pathway.

Rubric 2: Prevention Dividend™ Calculation

Use this rubric specifically for the Prevention Dividend policy brief assignment.

Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Intervention Design	Clearly defined, specific, and feasible. Targets root causes, not symptoms.	Defined but somewhat vague or overly broad.	Unclear or targets symptoms rather than root causes.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Cost Estimation	Uses real data or well-reasoned estimates. Sources cited. Assumptions explicit.	Reasonable estimates but with gaps or unstated assumptions.	Costs guessed without evidence or justification.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Prevented-Cost Logic	Traces causal chain from intervention to prevented costs across multiple domains. Quantifies convincingly.	Identifies some prevented costs. Causal logic present but incomplete.	Prevented costs claimed without causal reasoning.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Prevention Ratio™	Calculates current ratio with evidence. Demonstrates understanding of reactive vs. preventive allocation.	Ratio calculated but with limited evidence or partial understanding.	Ratio missing or conceptually confused.
Criterion	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B)	Developing (C)
Limitations	Honestly identifies what the analysis cannot prove. States data needs.	Some limitations noted.	No limitations or uncertainties acknowledged.

A Note on Assessing Systemic Thinking

Systemic thinking is not the same as listing multiple dimensions. The hallmark of excellent systemic analysis is integration—showing how elements reinforce or undermine each other. A student who analyzes ownership and culture separately is doing two analyses, not one systemic analysis. The integration criterion is where the cognitive leap happens, and it deserves substantial weighting.

Instructor insight: Assessing these assignments effectively requires the instructor to have real familiarity with the frameworks—not just the book's content, but the analytical practice of systemic thinking. If you are new to this material, consider grading the first round of assignments collaboratively with a colleague who has systems thinking experience, or scheduling an author consultation (see Section E) to discuss assessment challenges.

Section E: Guest Lecture and Author Engagement

Laurie Lane-Zucker is available for virtual class visits, guest lectures, and workshop facilitation in connection with course adoption of *The Impact Entrepreneur Breakthrough*. These sessions are designed to deepen students' engagement with the book's frameworks and connect classroom learning to the living practice of the Impact Economy.

Available Formats

1. Framework Deep-Dive (60–90 minutes)

The author leads an in-depth exploration of a specific framework—the Five Pillars of Real Security, Defense as a Service™, the three-layer integration model, or the cultural infrastructure sequence. Best suited for classes that have completed the relevant chapters and are ready for advanced application.

Suggested structure: Opening context and framing (15 min) → Framework walkthrough with real-world examples from the IE network of 70,000+ practitioners (20–25 min) → Guided application exercise: students work in pairs or small groups to apply the framework to a case (15–20 min) → Debrief and Q&A (15–20 min). The instructor should prepare students by assigning the relevant chapter and asking each student to bring one question or application challenge to the session.

2. Case Discussion (60 minutes)

Students present their own enterprise analyses, policy briefs, or community assessments and receive feedback from the author. The author connects student work to real-world examples from the Impact Entrepreneur network across 200+ countries. Best suited for Weeks 7–15 when students have developed substantial projects.

Suggested structure: Brief framing by instructor (5 min) → Student presentations, 2–3 selected projects (10 min each) → Author response connecting student work to practitioner experience (10 min per project) → Open discussion (10–15 min). Select projects in advance and share them with the author at least one week before the session so responses can be substantive rather than improvised.

3. Author Q&A (45–60 minutes)

An open conversation with the author about the book's arguments, the current state of the Impact Economy, and students' questions. Works at any point in the course. Particularly effective as a course opener (to build engagement) or closer (to connect frameworks to the living movement).

Suggested structure: Author opening remarks on a theme chosen by the instructor (10 min) → Moderated Q&A with student questions collected in advance and supplemented live (30–40 min) → Closing reflection (5 min). The instructor moderates. Collecting 3–5 questions in advance ensures the conversation has substance even if students are initially hesitant.

4. Workshop Facilitation (Half-Day)

The author facilitates an extended workshop applying book frameworks to participants' real contexts. Includes hands-on exercises with the Enterprise Design Canvas, Five Pillars assessment, Prevention Dividend™ calculation, or Culture Triage framework. Best suited for executive education intensives and advanced seminars.

Suggested structure: Keynote framing by the author (30 min) → First framework exercise in groups (45 min) → Break (15 min) → Second framework exercise, building on the first (45 min) → Group report-outs and synthesis (30 min) → Action planning and closing (15 min). The workshop is designed to model the book's values—collaborative, integrative, and grounded in participants' real contexts rather than hypothetical cases.

Booking

Virtual class visits are complimentary for adopting courses (one visit per term). For scheduling and formats:

Email: info@impactalchemist.com

Subject line: "Course Adoption – Guest Lecture Inquiry"

Web: www.impactentrepreneur.com/breakthrough

Please include your institution, course title, enrollment size, preferred dates, and which format interests you. We accommodate a range of institutional budgets and are committed to making author engagement accessible.

Course Adoption Registry

Instructors who adopt the book are invited to join the Course Adoption Registry on the IE platform. The Registry connects educators teaching from the book, enables sharing of syllabi and assignment ideas, builds social proof for prospective adopters, and provides access to updated teaching materials and case studies as they become available. To register, visit www.impactentrepreneur.com/breakthrough or email info@impactalchemist.com.

Continuing the Conversation

This Instructor's Supplement is part of the supplementary materials ecosystem for *The Impact Entrepreneur Breakthrough*. The **Reader's Companion** provides framework summaries, a contextual glossary, and reading group questions suitable for student use. The **Implementation Roadmap** offers diagnostic tools and 90-day sprint frameworks for practitioners. The **IE Platform Resource Hub** provides a living library of case studies, framework updates, and community features.

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