

Activity 2.3 Seeking Innovation¹

Description

This activity illustrates how to generate innovative ideas for current issues. By using mind mapping, participants describe the landscape of the issue and then use word connections to generate new ideas that can be developed into workable and innovative new directions.

Learning Goal

- Participants will be introduced to strategies and processes that will enable innovative thinking.

Practice (50 minutes)

Step One	<p><i>Begin by selecting an area of concern and taking inventory of what the group already knows about this topic.</i> This can be done on a board, flip chart, or online (try mindmeister).</p> <p>Tip: the online mind map could be completed prior to the group discussion.</p>	10 min
Step Two	<p><i>Next, introduce making “word connections”</i> which involves combining random words from a “good word list” and then exploring how these words might lead to new avenues of exploration. You can make up your own list or try using the IF Good Words List.</p> <p><i>Using the list of good words, randomly combine a verb, noun, and adjective.</i> Overlay this word combination with the mind map to see what connections might be made. Make a list of new ideas that emerge from this process. These ideas are not complete but the beginning of a new thought or area of exploration.</p> <p>Tip: discussion groups may struggle with the good words creative process at first. Encourage them to set aside critical analysis and just play with the process. What emerges?</p>	30 min
Step Three	<p><i>Regroup and Debrief.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How was the mind map helpful?	10 min

¹ **Citation for this activity:** Jack Byrd (2023). Seeking Innovation. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-2-creative-collaboration>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the struggles that you had in using the word combinations to generate possible innovations.• How might you coach others to overcome those struggles?• Which were your favorite ideas that came from the word connection process?	

Reflection Assignment

- How important was it to complete this activity in a group? Could you have done this activity alone? Would it have been as effective? Could you have done it better alone?
- What is your creative process? If nothing comes to mind, think back to when you were younger? How did you express creativity? What did you do when you were stuck on a problem and needed to see it from a different perspective?

Practice Journal

This week, select a topic that you already know well. Maybe it is your morning routine or a family problem. Create a mind map illustrating different aspects of this topic. Practice the good work activity. What, if any, innovative ideas emerged after practicing good words?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- Jack Byrd, "Making Creative Connections" (Forthcoming)