

Activity 2.4 Taking Risks

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Description

Often groups will default to safe choices. As a result, groups fail to identify possibilities that are bold, anticipatory, or break new ground. This activity demonstrates a process that encourages groups to take risks together.

Learning Goal

- Become more aware of the role that risk plays in group imagination and decision-making.

Instructions (60 minutes)

Set Up	<p>Prepare for the Activity</p> <p>Organize participants into pairs or small groups (3-5 ppl).</p> <p>Begin by introducing the learning goals of this activity.</p>	
Step One	<p>Take Inventory of Initial Reactions</p> <p>Share the following prompt or create a relevant prompt for your group:</p> <p>Institutions of higher education need to reimagine their role in society. What do you think the future university should look like?</p> <p>As a full group, take a few moments to generate responses to the question posed and record them on a board, flip chart or shared screen.</p>	5 min

¹ **Citation for this activity:** Jack Byrd (2023). Taking Risks. In Hartman and Byrd (Eds), The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/activities/module-2>

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<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Silently Reflect and Write Responses</p> <p>Invite everyone to think bolder by asking them to respond to one or two of the following questions. Share these questions on the board or screen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasis on Time. What would the university look like if it were forced to change in only two years? ● Emphasis on Change. How would the university look different if it were required by law to be accessible to all people? ● Emphasis on Structure. What if universities took on a corporate partner? How would this affect the role that it plays in society? ● Emphasis on Technology. How might your vision of the future university change if all instruction became automated and offered via AI? Or, entirely online? Asynchronously? <p>Provide ten minutes for silent reflection and writing.</p>	<p>10 min</p>
<p>Step Three</p>	<p>Re-imagine the Future in Groups</p> <p>In small groups, ask participants to share some of the ideas that they wrote down. Invite them to re-imagine together what a future university looks like. Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe your future university in a series of bullet points. <p>Reconvene as a full group, and invite groups to share their visions of the future university. Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are some common themes? ● What are the outliers? ● Can we agree on a future vision? 	<p>20 min</p>
<p>Step Four</p>	<p>Generate a List of Risks</p> <p>As a full group, imagine the risks that a university would encounter in moving toward this particular new model.</p> <p>Generate a list of these risks. Then make a parallel list of risks that a university would be taking if it didn't move to this new model when other universities moved in this bold new direction.</p> <p>Decide as a group on the preferred course of action.</p>	<p>15 min</p>
<p>Step Five</p>	<p>Debrief as a Full Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where did the boldest ideas come from? Individual reflection? Building on the ideas of others in discussion? Thinking about risks? ● How, if at all, did our vision for the future university change by following this process? ● How might you use this activity in your daily life? 	<p>10 min</p>

Reflection Journal

- Reflect on the following quote: “Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.” –Goethe
- Why do we have a hard time starting projects that might seem crazy to others?
- A key to thinking boldly is to be aware of self-censorship. Why do you think you might self-censor? What steps might you take to limit self-censorship in group settings?
- How might you encourage others to think boldly and take risks in group discussions?

Practice Journal

This week, pretend that you are a creativity coach. Your job is to encourage others to take risks and think boldly. Record at least one example of how you encouraged someone else to play with ideas and push their imagination to a more extreme end. What was the outcome? How did it feel to be a creativity coach?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Risk Taking in Discussions](#): Byrd, Jack. “Encouraging Risk Taking in Group Discussions.” *Interactivity Foundation*, 1 Sep. 2021, www.interactivityfoundation.org/encouraging-risk-taking-in-group-discussions/. Accessed 25 Aug. 2023.

Activity Cluster

2.4 Taking Risks

[2.8 Encouraging Bold Imagination
\(Telling the History of the Future\)](#)