

Activity 2.3 Seeking Innovation

(Good Word Connection)

Submitted by Jack Byrd, Jr.¹

Last Updated 08/29/2023



Description

This activity describes a simple practice for generating innovative ideas. By using mind mapping, participants describe the landscape of an issue and then use word connections to generate new ideas that can be developed into workable and innovative new directions.

Learning Goal

- Practice using “good word connections” as a strategy for sparking innovative thinking.

Instructions (50 minutes)

<p>Set Up</p>	<p>Prepare for the Activity</p> <p>Select a topic or area of concern that is important to your group.</p> <p>If possible, take inventory of what participants already know about this topic prior to the first gathering. This could be collected using an asynchronous mind map platform, like mindmeister.com.</p> <p>Begin by introducing the learning goals of this activity.</p>	
----------------------	--	--

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

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

<p>Step One</p>	<p>Take Inventory</p> <p>If participants completed an online mind map in advance, share this with the group. If not, take inventory of what the group already knows about the selected topic. This can be done on a board, flip chart, or online (try mindmeister).</p>	<p>10 min</p>
<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Introduce and Play with Word Connections</p> <p>Introduce the process of making “word connections.” Model how to combine random words from a “good word list” and then explore how these words might lead to new avenues of exploration. You can make up your own list or use the IF Good Words List.</p> <p>Using the list of good words, randomly combine a verb, noun, and adjective. Overlay this word combination with the mind map to see what connections might be made.</p> <p>Ask each participant to try making a word connection and then invite a couple of participants to share their words and how these specific words helped them to generate a new idea or the beginning of a new idea for the topic.</p> <p>Facilitator 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. If helpful, share this clip of Bob Dylan playing on word combination.</p>	<p>20 min</p>
<p>Step Three</p>	<p>Expand on Word Connections</p> <p>In pairs or small groups (3-5 ppl), invite participants to play with this exercise for an additional ten minutes. They can work together to randomly combine three words and then explore how this combination applies or can apply to the topic. This second step will force them to think creatively together and make connections that are not obvious at first glance.</p>	<p>10 min</p>
<p>Step Four</p>	<p>Debrief as a Full Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How was the initial list or mind map helpful? How does taking inventory help situate this activity? ● 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? ● How or when might you use this process again? 	<p>10 min</p>

Reflection Journal

- 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 word activity. What, if any, innovative ideas emerged after practicing good words?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Making Creative Connections](#): Byrd, Jack. “Making Creative Connections.” *Interactivity Foundation*, 4 Aug. 2021, www.interactivityfoundation.org/making-creative-connections/. Accessed 25 Aug. 2023.

Activity Cluster

2.3 Seeking Innovation

[2.7 Expanding Thinking with Metaphors](#)