

Exploring Leadership

ADAPTABILITY: INNOVATION

Although we often think of it as synonymous with invention, the word Innovation actually means seeing something in a new way. Many revolutionary changes in world history were brought about by Innovation. Steel, the electric light, the domestication of the horse, and the steam engine were all ideas that arose from looking at existing materials in new ways.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Display optical illusion virtually for participants to view.
- Sometimes the way we look at something changes the way we see it.

“Innovation comes from Latin root novus, which means new. Innovation is a new way of doing something or a new way of thinking about a problem so that you can solve it. Innovation involves creativity, open-mindedness, and flexibility, and it is a quality that many companies look for in leaders and employees.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Establish ways to practice innovative thinking.
- Encourage the benefit of sharing innovative ideas.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Pre-print this optical illusion: <https://www.insider.com/optical-illusion-quiz-2018-8>
- Computer to show YouTube video
- 30 Circles handout (see Appendix)
- Pens/Pencils
- Timer/Watch

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

- Show this YouTube Video [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liyMkOfyc0g>] to define Innovation in terms of “dots”.
- Say: “Speaking of dots, today you are going to practice Innovation by creating some ‘dots’ or circles of your own.”

- Pass out the 30 Circles Handout and pens/pencils.
- Explain the following Instructions:
 - There are 30 dots or circles on this page. Using a pencil or pen, transform as many circles as possible into something unique and recognizable.
 - You have three (3) minutes.
 - When time is up, compare results in small groups or with the entire group.
 - Look for common ideas: baseballs, eyes, wheels, rings, etc.
 - Look harder for Innovation -- new ideas that not everyone thought of.
 - Applaud diversity and flexibility in ideas.

FACILITATOR TIPS:

- With the 30 circles activity, don't give too many instructions. Let them “think outside the circle.”
- Invite participants to the front of the room to share their creations.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How many circles were you able to turn into a recognizable object?
- Did anyone “cheat”? Combine circles? Punch holes in the paper? Fold the paper? (Were the rules explicit or just assumed?)
- Which papers seemed to show the most Innovation?
- What was the most challenging aspect of this exercise? (Time? Creativity? Ideas?)

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What are some problems in the real world that resist typical solutions and need to be solved with innovative thinking?
- How can discussing problems and solutions with others with a fresh perspective lead to innovative ideas?
- Think of something in your own life that might call for an innovative solution? Can you think about the issue in a new way to try to resolve it?



CONCLUSION:

Innovation isn't solely represented by new devices and technologies, but also by the process of uncovering new ways to do things. It is as much about thinking as it is about inventing or creating. The only thing certain about the future is change, so if we can learn to think in innovative ways, we will be able to adapt to whatever may come.

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REFERENCES

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- <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/creative-exercises-better-than-brainstorming>
- <https://medium.com/constraint-drives-creativity/10-creativity-challenges-to-exercise-your-creative-confidence-ff6f19ba4241>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/05/08/why-innovation-is-crucial-to-your-organizations-long-term-success/?sh=2f8df37a3098>
- Optical Illusions: <https://michaelbach.de/ot/>



APPENDIX:

30 Circles Activity: Using a pencil or pen, transform as many circles as possible into something unique and recognizable.

