Quick and Easy Creativity Techniques to Get Unstuck
2021 Lean Transformation Conference

Additional Techniques to Try

Field Observations. Go, see, learn is an essential part of improvement and creativity.
- Types of observations include:
  - Seeing a process or service in motion firsthand (maybe paired with time studies)
  - Collecting open-ended insights from random or intentional settings to fuel ideas generation – what people are doing, sensory and emotional experiences, physical layout attributes
  - Immersion to walk in people's shoes and understand their lives through shadowing, asking them to record experiences, temporarily relocating to their setting and so on
- A few resources with tips and examples:
  - Pause, Notice, Observe http://jobaids.sitel.org/thinkdifferently/pause_notice_observe.html
  - Spark Innovation Through Empathic Design https://hbr.org/1997/11/spark-innovation-through-empathic-design
  - Ethnography - Living Guide to Social Innovation Labs (gitbook.io) https://mars-solutions-lab.gitbook.io/living-guide-to-social-innovation-labs/seeing/design-research/ethnography
  - AEIOU Observation Framework (openpracticelibrary.com) https://openpracticelibrary.com/practice/aeiou-observation-framework/

Prototyping and Simulation. Rapid, rough prototyping and trystorming help us gain experience and get feedback with ideas before going too far in the process or investing much effort/resources. IDEO, the product design firm, calls this *building to think*. Another way to frame it: *the faster you try an idea, the faster you learn*.
- Typical approaches:
  - Sketches and storyboards on paper
  - Physical mockups using existing materials and equipment, e.g., cardboard, tape, pvc pipes, widgets, supplies, etc. (nothing fancy!)
  - Role playing and simulation
  - Physical space and flow models using Legos or other toys
- A few resources with tips and examples:
  - Prototyping: Learn Eight Common Methods and Best Practices https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/prototyping-learn-eight-common-methods-and-best-practices
  - How Do You Move from an Idea to a Prototype? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKlRD7-kz4Y
  - Make Your Ideas Tangible Through Prototypes – IDEO U https://www.ideou.com/blogs/page/make-your-ideas-tangible-through-prototypes

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Seven Levels of Change by Rolph Smith. This is a useful framework to identify the level of change needed or desired, from incremental to innovative.

- Summary of the seven levels of change:
  1. **Doing the right things**
     Effectiveness, focus and working to priorities

  2. **Doing things right**
     Efficiency, standards and variation reduction

  3. **Doing things better**
     Improving, thinking logically about what we are doing and listening to suggestions

  4. **Doing away with things**
     Cutting, asking "why do we do this?," simplifying and stopping what really doesn't matter

  5. **Doing things that others are doing**
     Observing, copying and seeking out best practice

  6. **Doing things no one else is doing**
     Being really different, combining existing concepts and asking "why not?"

  7. **Doing things that cannot be done**
     Doing what is commonly thought to be impossible, questioning basic assumptions, breaking the rules and being a bit crazy

- Here's a Rolph Smith with a 3-minute video explanation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_CzJldmu0I
- Smith's related book is *Seven Levels of Change. Different Thinking for Different Results*

Six Thinking Hats®. Developed by Dr. Edward de Bono, this also is known as lateral or parallel thinking. It is helpful for evaluating and strengthening ideas to try out. Other uses include gathering input about a proposed change or facilitating a decision in a structured way.

- The six hats are:
  - White – information, data needed
  - Yellow – positives, benefits
  - Black – concerns, risks, worries
  - Red – feelings, intuitions
  - Green – new ideas, possibilities, alternatives
  - Blue – facilitator, controller of the exercise (e.g., helping people think focus on one hat at a time)
- More background https://www.debonogroup.com/services/core-programs/six-thinking-hats/

WordPlay. This is a helpful technique for (1) deconstructing jargon and identifying underlying needs and functions behind a process or service or (2) identifying random connections to fuel creativity and redesign.

- Helpful overview on the first use http://jobaids.sitel.org/thinkdifferently/wordplay.html
- Helpful overviews on the second use:

- o How to Come Up with Disruptive Ideas Using 'Random Words'?
  https://benovative.medium.com/how-to-come-up-with-disruptive-ideas-using-random-words-including-video-84e5fcd6d609
- o How to Generate Original Creative Ideas with Random Word Stimulation
  https://innovationmanagement.se/2009/08/09/how-to-generate-original-creative-ideas-with-random-word-stimulation/

Creativity Resources

Directed Creativity. Website of innovation author Paul Plsek that includes helpful explanations of creativity concepts.
- www.directedcreativity.com

IDEO. Creativity resources and case examples from the global design firm and leader in human-centered design.
- Main site www.ideo.com
- Field Guide to Human-Centered Design https://www.designkit.org
- Nature Cards www.ideo.com/post/nature-cards
- IDEO U for design thinking coursework https://www.ideou.com/
- Government case examples https://www.ideo.com/question/how-can-government-be-more-citizen-centered

MI2 University. MedStar Institute for Innovation website with teachings and techniques.
- jobaids.sitel.org/thinkdifferently/index.html

Stanford d.school. Stanford University's design school with helpful free online resources.
- Bootcamp Bootleg Method Cards
  https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57c6b79629687fde090a0fdd/t/58890239db29d6cc6c3338f7/1485374014340/METHODCARDS-v3-slim.pdf
- Other resources https://dschool.stanford.edu/resources

tDX – theDesignExchange. Open source innovation exchange of methods and case examples managed by the University of California at Berkley.
- https://www.thedesignexchange.org/

Thinking Differently*.* Open source PDF booklet with creativity techniques and case examples released by the United Kingdom's National Health Service Institute for Innovation and Improvement.
- https://www.innovationagencynwc.nhs.uk/media/documents/PIP/thinking_differently%20Book%20(2).pdf