

The **BIG** Book of **CREATIVITY** **GAMES**

Quick, Fun Activities for
Jumpstarting Innovation

Robert Epstein, Ph.D.

Editor-in-Chief, *Psychology Today*

University Research Professor, United States International University

Director Emeritus, Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies

Chairman and CEO, InnoGen International

McGraw-Hill

New York San Francisco Washington, D.C. Auckland Bogotá
Caracas Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City Milan
Montreal New Delhi San Juan Singapore
Sydney Tokyo Toronto

McGraw-Hill

A Division of The McGraw-Hill Companies



Copyright © 2000 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a data base or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 AGM / AGM 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

ISBN 0-07-136176-6

The sponsoring editor for this book was Richard Narramore, the editing supervisor was Paul R. Sobel, and the production supervisor was Charles Annis. This book was set in Arial by Jessica Rogers. Printed and bound by QuebecorWorld / Martinsburg.

McGraw-Hill books are available at special quantity discounts to use as premiums and sales promotions, or for use in corporate training programs. For more information, please write to the Director of Special Sales, McGraw-Hill, 2 Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121-2298. Or contact your local bookstore.



This book is printed on recycled, acid-free paper containing a minimum of 50% recycled deinked fiber.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xiii

GETTING READY 1

The New Science and Technology of Creativity 3

How to Use This Book 17

THE GAMES 27

The ABCs of Creativity 29

How success can kill creativity

The Amazing Magazine Game 33

More diverse reading leads to more diverse ideas

The Anonymous Suggestion Game 35

How to use anonymity to boost creativity

The Audience Game 41

Facing an audience can stimulate ideas

Bridges to Creativity 45

Open-ended instructions can produce better bridges

Broadening: *Design Challenge* 53

Participants design a game to show the power of broadening

Broadening: *Workplace Challenge* 57

Participants plan for diverse training in their workplace

The Broader the Better 59

Bringing more skills to a problem leads to fresher ideas

Building a Better Capturing Machine 63

Participants use what's on hand to preserve new ideas

Capturing: *Design Challenge* 67

Participants design a game to show the power of capturing

Capturing: *Workplace Challenge* 71

Participants find better ways to preserve ideas in their workplace

Capturing a Daydream 73

Using unguided imagery to learn about creative potential

Challenging: *Design Challenge* 77

Participants design a game to show how failure spurs creativity

Challenging: *Workplace Challenge* 81

Participants find ways to manage failure in their workplace

Creative Potential: *Design Challenge* 83

Participants design a game that reveals our creative potential

Creative Potential: *Workplace Challenge* 87

Participants reveal the creative potential in their workplace

The Experts Game 89

Exploiting expertise to boost creativity

Feedback and Recognition: *Design Challenge* 91

Participants design a game to show the power of feedback

- Feedback and Recognition: *Workplace Challenge*** 95
Participants improve feedback practices in their workplace
- The Keys to Creativity (Basic Version)** 99
Volunteers try to retrieve keys using a broom or mop
- The Keys to Creativity (Advanced Version)** 105
Solving a tougher, more realistic version of the keys problem
- The Lola Cola Game** 109
A naming game, in which instructions make all the difference
- Managing Resources: *Design Challenge*** 113
Participants design a game to show how resources help creativity
- Managing Resources: *Workplace Challenge*** 117
Participants plan better resource management for their workplace
- Managing Teams: *Design Challenge*** 119
Participants design a game to show how to use teams wisely
- Managing Teams: *Workplace Challenge*** 123
Participants plan better team management for their workplace
- The Memory Game** 127
Some people record their new ideas, while others rely on memory
- The Monkey-Do Game** 131
Will participants imitate the bad habits of the group leader?
- The News-You-Can-Use Game** 135
Solving a simple problem using a newspaper
- The No-Hands Game** 141
A fun competition in which instructions are pitted against feedback

The Not-for-the-Fainthearted Game 145

A shaping game that shows how failure leads to new ideas

The Odd Couple Game 149

How odd pairings can stimulate creativity

The Popsicology Game 153

The more popsicle sticks, the better the designs

The Random Doodles Game 157

Remembering our scribblings can be tough

Selling a Zork 163

Odd stimuli bring out instant creativity in this fun sales game

The Shifting Game 167

Shifting in and out of teams brings lots more ideas

The Srtcdjgklered Game 171

Participants complete a fun story using “work ticklers”

Sticky Business 177

Teams compete in design contest, but some need more glue

Surrounding: *Design Challenge* 181

Participants design a game to show the power of unusual stimuli

Surrounding: *Workplace Challenge* 185

Participants redesign their workplaces to boost creativity

The Team as Quality Editor 187

How teams excel at screening ideas

The Tell-Me-a-Story Game 191

Participants tell a story inspired by an unusual stimulus

The Tiny Little Nod Game 195

A shaping game showing the power of subtle feedback

The Toys-as-Tools Game 199

Participants invent new children's toys

The Ultimate Challenge Game 203

Participants solve problems that have no solutions

The Ultimate Design Game 207

Participants boost workplace creativity by a factor of ten or more

The Waiting Game 211

A new idea gets you released from the room

What D'Ya Know? 213

How strong are your creativity competencies?

INDEX 219

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 225

**getting
ready...**

THE NEW SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF CREATIVITY

These aren't just any old games. They're games born of extensive laboratory research on the creative process. So before we starting fooling around, let's take a quick look at the underlying science.

Myth Busting

Everybody knows that creativity—the ability to express ideas which are both new and valuable—is mysterious, right? And even a 6-year-old can tell you that creativity is located in the right brain.

But systematic research on the creative process in individuals shows otherwise. In fact, many common conceptions about creativity prove to be shaky when you look at the creative process carefully.

Myth: Creativity is rare. Actually, research shows that the neural processes that underlie creativity are universal. We couldn't make our way through a new shopping mall or say a new sentence without them. Creative *expression* is rare, but that has more to do with the way we're socialized than it does with ability. In fact, we all probably have the creative potential of Mozart, Einstein, and Picasso. Want to know how to tap that potential? Keep reading!

Myth: Only high IQs have creativity. Several studies reveal a correlation between intelligence and creativity, but correlational studies don't shed light on causal relationships. In other words, no study has ever shown that any particular degree of

intelligence is *necessary* for creativity, and there are plenty of prominent artists, inventors, poets, and composers of average smarts.

Myth: Creativity can't be studied. The first psychology laboratory was established in the late 1800s. Before that, many people claimed that human thinking and behavior would forever be beyond the reach of scientific understanding. But learning, memory, development, and many other aspects of human behavior are now studied routinely in laboratories around the world, and enormous advances have been made on every front. Research on creativity began in the 1950s, with careful laboratory studies beginning in the 1970s. And, again, enormous advances have been made.

Myth: It's in your right brain. Studies of a small number of split-brain patients in the 1960s stimulated a Left-Brain-Right-Brain craze that has gotten completely out of hand. Keep in mind that there are only a few dozen people on the planet whose brains have been surgically split; the other five billion of us have intact brains, the two halves of which are joined by perhaps 100 million nerve fibers. No one has ever found a specific neural location for creativity, and people who claim to be able to train you to use a dormant side of your brain are deluding you, themselves, or both.

Myth: Creativity is mysterious. Actually, some important aspects of the creative process in individuals are now well understood. The process will probably always *feel* mysterious because feelings of frustration and confusion often accompany the process. But some of the basic laws that govern the generation of new ideas have now been

discovered, and significant practical applications of the basic science are well underway.

Myth: Creativity can't be learned. In fact, virtually everyone can learn to express greater creativity. The key is to develop some simple skills or “competencies,” which are as easy to learn as, say, tying your shoes. Exercises in this book will help you master these skills, and the last chapter will even allow you to test your current skill levels.

If you want to talk to a group about the myths that surround creativity, you might want to make a handout or overhead transparency from the figure on page 10. Figures suitable for copying are included throughout this book.

Generativity Theory and Research

The games in this volume are based on a body of scientific research called “generativity” research, which focuses on understanding the emergence of novel behavior continuously in time. In the early 1980s, this research yielded a formal scientific theory called Generativity Theory. Expressed as a series of equations and various computer models, the theory has shown that novel behavior in individuals—the kind of behavior that is sometimes labeled “creative”—is orderly and predictable. In the laboratory, novel behavior can even be predicted moment-to-moment in time.

The basic idea behind Generativity Theory isn't new (ironic, isn't it?). People suggested long ago that new ideas come from combinations of old ones. Generativity Theory simply expresses that concept more precisely. Generativity research also demonstrates how certain types of experiences influence the creative process. For example, the research shows that there is an orderly relationship between what we have learned and the new

ideas we can express, and it also shows that failure (or “extinction”) helps spur the creative process in predictable ways. For a more detailed look at Generativity Theory and research, consult other books by the author, or read about the theory in the new *Encyclopedia of Creativity*, published by Academic Press.

The figure on page 11 summarizes the basic features of Generativity Theory, and the figures on pages 12 and 13 summarize the practical implications of the theory. Again, you might find it helpful to make overheads of these figures for group activities.

Just How Competent Are You?

Generativity research pinpoints four “core competencies”—underlying skills and tendencies—that help people express their creativity. Remember that *everyone* has roughly equal creative potential. People who express creativity frequently have mastered certain core skills, and anyone can master these skills:

Capturing. New ideas are often fleeting. They come, they go, they’re gone, like a rabbit scurrying through the woods. “Creative” people have learned to preserve new ideas as they occur—to preserve first and evaluate later. Fortunately, it’s easy to learn ways to capture new ideas, and strengthening skills in this competency area alone will often boost creative “output” by a factor of 10 or more.

Challenging. Failure sets in motion a behavioral process called “resurgence”—the reappearance of old behaviors that used to work in situations like the current one. If you have trouble turning a door knob, for example, you’ll quickly resort to methods that used to work on other doors: turning harder,

kicking the door, shouting for help, even shouting for your mom. The good thing about this process is that it gets multiple behaviors competing with each other, and when behaviors compete, new behaviors are often born. In other words, failure spurs creativity. The bad thing about this process is the way it feels: Behavioral competition feels confusing or frustrating. This competency area involves a variety of techniques for managing failure—for eliminating the fear of failure, for seeking and limiting failure, and for managing the emotions that accompany failure.

Broadening. If you're writing your first symphony, and you've never heard any music other than symphonies by Beethoven, your style will probably be limited. The more diverse your existing "repertoires of behavior," the more interesting and diverse the interconnections. Therefore, one of the simplest ways to boost creativity is to broaden your knowledge base. In other words, instead of taking another course on Windows architecture, try one on Medieval architecture.

Surrounding. Multiple behaviors are also set in motion by multiple or unusual stimuli in the environment. Imagine approaching a stop light, for example, on which both the red and green lights are illuminated. How would this very unusual (and very broken) stimulus make you feel and behave? Your right foot will probably tap dance between the accelerator pedal and the brake pedal, during which time you'll feel somewhat confused or uncertain (great emotions when it comes to creativity). The point is that we can accelerate and direct the creative process by managing our environment systematically—both the physical environment (the decorations in our office, for example) and the social

environment (the people with whom we work and play).

A variety of research also suggests that managers, teachers, parents, and other supervisors need some special competencies—eight in all—in order to elicit creativity in other people. This book contains games that teach and strengthen all of the four core competencies—the main focus of the book—as well as all of the eight managerial competencies. The figures on pages 14, 15, and 16 summarize the individual and managerial competencies.

In addition to the basic competency areas, it's often important to provide people with some basic creativity training. This is helpful because the misconceptions about creativity are so strong. Most people believe they're not creative, for one thing; some simple games will quickly convince them otherwise. The next chapter will show you how to use the 48 games in this book for basic creativity training, for strengthening specific competencies, and for common organizational purposes.

A competencies approach has been enormously helpful in improving leadership, sales, and other abilities. Generally speaking, training people produces far greater economic benefits—and far fewer lawsuits—than “selecting” people. It also avoids the hazards of labeling. Nothing in this book should lead you to label someone “creative” or “dull.” Since research shows that generative processes are universal, all of the games in this book focus on building skills and knowledge—all of which lead to greater creative expression. No labels, please.

Okay, Let's Fool Around

Just as the competencies approach has been helpful for managing human resources, the games approach has been a breath of fresh air for training. Games are as engaging for adults as they are for kids, and that's the point:

Properly constructed games make learning fun.

Many of the games in this book were developed for college students—and then revised and refined with business executives—with two purposes in mind: to *teach* about the creative process, and to *boost and direct* creative expression. Their dual purpose makes them fairly unique in the world of creativity training. The idea is not just to boost creativity but also to teach basic principles that will help people boost their own creativity throughout their lives.

Want More?

Some of the games in this book are described in more detail in Epstein's *Creativity Games for Trainers*, published by McGraw-Hill in 1996. For further information about Generativity Theory, check *Cognition, Creativity, and Behavior*, published by Praeger in 1996, or, as noted above, consult the new *Encyclopedia of Creativity*. For more information about creativity training and testing, contact InnoGen International at www.innogen.com or 1-877-INNOGEN. To contact the author directly—preferably with praise and money—write repstein@post.harvard.edu.

MYTHS ABOUT CREATIVITY

It's rare.

Only high IQs have it.

It's in your right brain.

It can't be studied.

It's mysterious.



GENERATIVITY BASICS

- g Competing behaviors produce new behaviors.**
- g The combinatorial process is orderly and predictable.**
- g By influencing the type and number of competing behaviors, we can accelerate and direct creativity.**

IMPLICATIONS OF GENERATIVITY THEORY

- T Everyone has roughly equal creative potential.**
- T “Creative” people have special skills.**
- T Anyone can learn these skills.**
- T The creative process can be accelerated and directed.**



LESSONS FROM GENERATIVITY RESEARCH

- i** **People need to learn to *pay attention to* and to *preserve their new ideas*.**
- i** ***Failure is invaluable* for creativity, because it causes ideas to compete.**
- i** ***Broad training* is important for creativity, because it makes diverse ideas available to compete.**
- i** **Properly-designed *physical and social environments* can stimulate creativity by causing ideas to compete.**

FOUR CORE COMPETENCIES FOR INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY

CAPTURING
Preserves New Ideas

CHALLENGING
Seeks Challenges and Manages Failure

BROADENING
Broadens Skills and Knowledge

SURROUNDING
Changes Physical and Social Environment

CREATIVITY COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT

g CAPTURING

**Carrying notebooks, tape recorders
Finding the right place and time
The Three B's: Bed, Bath, and Bus
Daydreaming and sleep
The hypnogogic state
Anonymous channels**

g CHALLENGING

**Controlled failure systems
Open-ended problems
Ultimate problems**

g BROADENING

**Sign up for training in new fields.
Read, listen, and learn outside your area of expertise.
Spend a day a month in a "foreign territory."**

g SURROUNDING

**Relocating
Redecorating
Scheduled changes
Cross-functional teams
New magazine, newspaper, journal subscriptions
Intelligent screen savers**

MANAGERS, TEACHERS, SUPERVISORS: EIGHT COMPETENCIES

- T Encourages the Preservation of New Ideas**
- T Challenges Others**
- T Encourages Broadening of Knowledge and Skills**
- T Manages Surroundings to Stimulate Creativity**
- T Manages Teams to Stimulate Creativity**
- T Manages Resources to Stimulate Creativity**
- T Provides Feedback and Recognition to Stimulate Creativity**

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This chapter will help you decide which games are best suited for your needs. Find your purpose, and the pertinent game titles will follow. The games themselves follow this chapter in alphabetical order by title, so you'll find them easy to locate whether you're just starting out or already familiar with the games.

Each game chapter begins with a thumbnail sketch of the game, followed by sections that will tell you how much time you'll need to play the game, what people will learn from the game, what supplies you'll need, and how to run the game. Discussion questions follow, along with suggestions for customizing the game for different settings and situations.

The book also includes several "Design Challenges," in which participants are asked to design their own games, along with various "Workplace Challenges," in which participants are asked to apply what they've learned to their particular workplaces.

What's Your Game?

Why do you want to play creativity games? Some common purposes are listed below, along with the titles of the games that you'll probably find most helpful for accomplishing your goal. If you don't find your purpose in the list, try the "competencies" section later in this chapter. If that doesn't work, start flipping pages until you see titles, phrases, or art that catches your eye. (Alternatively, use the classic "blind" strategy: Close your eyes, flip through the book, and stop at some random page. Check out whatever game you've come to; it's probably good for *something*. This is

a “surrounding” technique, by the way—great for spurring creativity.)

Note that the same game might be helpful in more than one category.

Purpose: *Convincing people that they're creative*

Games: Capturing a Daydream (p. 73)
Selling a Zork (p. 163)
The Srtcdjgklered Game (p. 171)
The Tell-Me-a-Story Game (p. 191)

Purpose: *Getting a project off the ground*

Games: The Amazing Magazine Game (p. 33)
The Anonymous Suggestion Game (p. 35)
Bridges to Creativity (p. 45)
Broadening: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 57)
Capturing: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 71)
Challenging: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 81)
Creative Potential: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 87)
The Experts Game (p. 89)
The Lola Cola Game (p. 109)
Managing Resources: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 117)
Managing Teams: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 123)
The Memory Game (p. 127)
The Monkey-Do Game (p. 131)
The Odd Couple Game (p. 149)
The Popsicology Game (p. 153)
The Shifting Game (p. 167)
Sticky Business (p. 177)
Surrounding: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 185)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)
The Ultimate Design Game (p. 207)

Purpose: *Moving a project in a new direction*

Games: The ABCs of Creativity (p. 29)
The Anonymous Suggestion Game (p. 35)
Bridges to Creativity (p. 45)
Broadening: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 57)
Capturing: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 71)
Challenging: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 81)
Creative Potential: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 87)
The Experts Game (p. 89)
Feedback and Recognition: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 95)
The Lola Cola Game (p. 109)
Managing Resources: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 117)
Managing Teams: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 123)
The Memory Game (p. 127)
The Monkey-Do Game (p. 131)
The Not-for-the-Fainthearted Game (p. 145)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)
The Ultimate Design Game (p. 207)

Purpose: *Perking up a meeting*

Games: The No-Hands Game (p. 141)
Selling a Zork (p. 163)
The Srtcdjgklerden Game (p. 171)
The Tell-Me-a-Story Game (p. 191)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)
The Ultimate Design Game (p. 207)

Purpose: *Starting the day*

Games: Capturing a Daydream (p. 73)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)
The Srtcdjgklerden Game (p. 171)
The Tell-Me-a-Story Game (p. 191)

Purpose: Ending a “block”

Games: The Broader the Better (p. 59)
Capturing a Daydream (p. 73)
The Odd Couple Game (p. 149)
The Srtcdjgklerden Game (p. 171)
The Tell-Me-a-Story Game (p. 191)
What D’Ya Know? (p. 213)

Purpose: Training managers

Games: The Anonymous Suggestion Game (p. 35)
Bridges to Creativity (p. 45)
The Broader the Better (p. 59)
The Experts Game (p. 89)
The Lola Cola Game (p. 109)
The Memory Game (p. 127)
The Monkey-Do Game (p. 131)
The No-Hands Game (p. 141)
The Not-for-the-Fainthearted Game (p. 145)
The Popsicology Game (p. 153)
The Shifting Game (p. 167)
Sticky Business (p. 177)
The Team as Quality Editor (p. 187)
The Tiny Little Nod Game (p. 195)
The Toys-as-Tools Game (p. 199)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)
The Ultimate Design Game (p. 207)
What D’Ya Know? (p. 213)

Purpose: Half-day seminar (in suggested order)

Games: Capturing a Daydream (p. 73)
Selling a Zork (p. 163)
Building a Better Capturing Machine (p. 63)

The Memory Game (p. 127)
The Lola Cola Game (p. 109)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)
The Experts Game (p. 89)
The Odd Couple Game (p. 149)
The Srtcdjgklerden Game (p. 171)
The Tell-Me-a-Story Game (p. 191)
What D'Ya Know? (p. 213)

Purpose: Two-day seminar (in suggested order)

Games: Capturing a Daydream (p. 73)
Selling a Zork (p. 163)

Building a Better Capturing Machine (p. 63)
The Memory Game (p. 127)
The Random Doodles Game (p. 157)
The Anonymous Suggestion Game (p. 35)
Capturing: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 71)

The Lola Cola Game (p. 109)
The Not-for-the-Fainthearted Game (p. 145)
The Keys to Creativity (Basic and Advanced
Versions) (pp. 99, 105)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)
Challenging: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 81)

The Experts Game (p. 89)
The Broader the Better (p. 59)
The Amazing Magazine Game (p. 33)
The Odd Couple Game (p. 149)
Broadening: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 57)

The Srtcdjgktered Game (p. 171)
The Audience Game (p. 41)
The Tell-Me-a-Story Game (p. 191)
The Toys-as-Tools Game (p. 199)
Surrounding: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 185)

The Shifting Game (p. 167)
The Team as Quality Editor (p. 187)
The Popsicology Game (p. 153)
The Monkey-Do Game (p. 131)
The Ultimate Design Game (p. 207)

Focus on Competencies

If your main interest is in boosting creativity in a particular setting—say, to rescue a failing organization or to keep a business competitive—you might want to use the games to build specific creativity competencies. In this case, start your session by administering the test in “What D’Ya Know?” (page 213), and choose games that will strengthen the kinds of skills that people need most. This test is an abridged version of the *Epstein Creativity Competencies Inventory for Individuals (ECCL-i)*, which measures the four core competencies that underlie individual creativity. The *Epstein Creativity Competencies Inventory for Managers (ECCL-m)*, which measures the eight competencies that are important for the management of creativity in other people, is not included in this volume.

Here is a list of the twelve competency areas, along with games that can help you build those competencies:

CORE Competency 1

Preserves New Ideas (Capturing)

Games: Building a Better Capturing Machine (p. 63)

Capturing a Daydream (p. 73)
Capturing: *Design Challenge* (p. 67)
Capturing: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 71)
The Memory Game (p. 127)
The Random Doodles Game (p. 157)

CORE Competency 2

Seeks Challenges (Challenging)

Games: The ABCs of Creativity (p. 29)
Challenging: *Design Challenge* (p. 77)
Challenging: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 81)
The Keys to Creativity (Basic Version) (p. 99)
The Not-for-the-Fainthearted Game (p. 145)
The Ultimate Challenge Game (p. 203)

CORE Competency 3

Broadens Skills and Knowledge (Broadening)

Games: The Broader the Better (p. 59)
Broadening: *Design Challenge* (p. 53)
Broadening: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 57)
The Experts Game (p. 89)
The News-You-Can-Use Game (p. 135)

CORE Competency 4

Changes Physical and Social Environment (Surrounding)

Games: The Audience Game (p. 41)
The Keys to Creativity (Advanced Version) (p. 105)
Selling a Zork (p. 163)
The Srtcdjgjklered Game (p. 171)
Surrounding: *Design Challenge* (p. 181)
Surrounding: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 185)
The Tell-Me-a-Story Game (p. 191)

MANAGERIAL Competency 1

Encourages Preservation of New Ideas

- Games: The Anonymous Suggestion Game (p. 35)
The Memory Game (p. 127)

MANAGERIAL Competency 2

Challenges Employees

- Games: Bridges to Creativity (p. 45)
The Keys to Creativity (Basic and Advanced Versions) (pp. 99, 105)
The Lola Cola Game (p. 109)
The Ultimate Design Game (p. 207)
The Waiting Game (p. 211)

MANAGERIAL Competency 3

Encourages Broadening of Knowledge and Skills

- Games: The Amazing Magazine Game (p. 33)
The Odd Couple Game (p. 149)

MANAGERIAL Competency 4

Manages Surroundings to Stimulate Creativity

- Games: The Keys to Creativity (Advanced Version) (p. 105)
Selling a Zork (p. 163)
The Srtcdjgktered Game (p. 171)
The Toys-as-Tools Game (p. 199)

MANAGERIAL Competency 5

Manages Teams to Stimulate Creativity

- Games: Managing Teams: *Design Challenge* (p. 119)
Managing Teams: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 123)
The Shifting Game (p. 167)
The Team as Quality Editor (p. 187)

MANAGERIAL Competency 6

Manages Resources to Stimulate Creativity

- Games: Managing Resources: *Design Challenge* (p. 113)
 Managing Resources: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 117)
 The Popsicology Game (p. 153)
 Sticky Business (p. 177)

MANAGERIAL Competency 7

Provides Feedback and Recognition to Stimulate Creativity

- Games: Feedback and Recognition: *Design Challenge* (p. 91)
 Feedback and Recognition: *Workplace Challenge* (p. 95)
 The No-Hands Game (p. 141)
 The Tiny Little Nod Game (p. 195)

MANAGERIAL Competency 8

Models Appropriate Creativity-Management Skills

- Games: The Monkey-Do Game (p. 131)

And with that, as some highly-placed ancient Romans used to say (more or less), "Let the creativity games begin!"

**the
games!**

THE ABCs OF CREATIVITY

In a Nutshell



The group leader asks some volunteers to spell a series of words using children's alphabet blocks. Some volunteers are given a series of easy tasks before being given a difficult one; others start out with a difficult task.

Time

30 minutes.

What You'll Learn

Success can interfere with your creativity and your ability to solve problems. If you've been too successful in some situation, you may be insensitive to changing conditions.

What You'll Need

A set of standard children's alphabet blocks, and a timer or clock.

Before conducting this game, you must prepare the alphabet blocks. The preparation is simple, but you must do it

carefully, or the game will fail. All you need to do is to remove all blocks containing the letter “T” (both uppercase or lowercase). That’s easy enough, but when you remove those blocks, you will also be removing other alphabet letters—the ones on the blocks with the Ts on them. When you do that, you may need to modify the list of words that you will be asking the first group of volunteers to spell (see next page). The participants should be able to spell these words using letters on the blocks.

What to Do

Part One: Select six volunteers, have one sit at the table in front of the room, and send the other five out of the room. You may also wish to select someone to serve as the official timekeeper for the game. The timekeeper is stationed at the table in front of the room. The timekeeper should be equipped with a stopwatch or timer and with a bucket of alphabet blocks.

Now, ask the timekeeper to dump the blocks. Ask your volunteer to spell BOX—as quickly as possible. As soon as the volunteer has located the correct alphabet letters and arranged them in order (this should only take a few seconds), congratulate the volunteer, and have the timekeeper announce the time and record it. This procedure should be repeated for the words ZIP, MAN, HOP, and LIT.

The volunteer should have no trouble with the first four words (BOX, ZIP, MAN, and HOP) but may have some difficulty with LIT, because the blocks do not contain any Ts. The solution is simple, of course—if you’re a child! You simply use any

blocks to form the shape of a T, or perhaps the shapes of all three letters (L, I, and T). In any case, the solution time for LIT will probably be longer than for the first four words.

Part Two: Now the fourth, fifth, and sixth volunteers should be given their chance; however, they will be asked to spell just one word: LIT. The instructions from Part One of the game should be modified accordingly.

When all six of the volunteers have completed the task, the timekeeper needs to compute only two numbers: the average time it took the first group (of three volunteers) to spell LIT, and the average time it took the second group to spell LIT.

Typically, the average time is much longer in the first group than in the second. Previous success at solving the problem a certain way interferes with creativity when the problem changes.

Discussion Questions

1. Was everyone able to spell LIT? Did some people have more trouble than others? Who had trouble, and why?
2. Did experience on the simple spelling tasks help or hurt on the more difficult task?
3. Previous success can both help and hurt when you're faced with a new problem. Can you think of examples?

Alternative

Change the words to suit your needs, but do so cautiously. It's important that all of the words be the same length, and all of the words except the test word should be easy to spell using the alphabet letters printed on the blocks.

If You're Short on Time

You may want to cut down on the number of volunteers. Instead of three volunteers for each part, try just one volunteer for Part One, and another for Part Two. You can even skip Part Two altogether and still get your point across.

Tip!

Some people may get frustrated when they can't find the letter T. Remember that in the context of these games, frustration is a good sign, not a bad one. Reminding the group that that's the case will relieve some of the pressure. Feel free to offer encouragement. The phrase, "You can do it!" can work wonders.

THE AMAZING MAGAZINE GAME

In a Nutshell

Participants are asked to develop as many new products as possible using certain magazines.



Time

20 minutes.

What You'll Learn

Diverse stimuli enhance creativity.

What You'll Need

Six magazines for every pair of teams: Three magazines from a particular business or industry, and three colorful popular magazines, each very different from the other (e.g., *Vogue*, *Psychology Today*, and *TV Guide*).

What to Do

Divide the group in two, with the Rockin' Readers on one side of the room and the Super Subscribers on the other. Divide each subgroup into teams of about five people. Now give each Rockin' Reader team three serious trade magazines, and give each Super Subscriber team three colorful popular magazines. Next, give the teams 15 minutes to develop as many new products and services as possible, using the magazines to help them. The Super Subscribers should outperform the Rockin' Readers. Lead a discussion about the results.

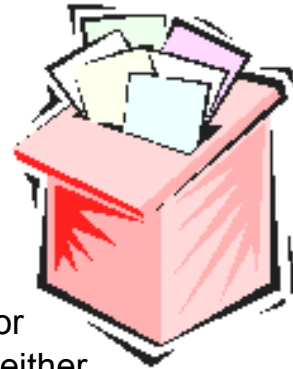
Discussion Questions

1. Which team developed the most ideas? Why?
2. What effect did the colorful popular magazines have in the creation of new ideas?
3. How could the results of this game be applied to your workplace?

Alternative

Instead of asking the participants to create new services or products, give them a naming task. For example, have them think of new car or cola names. For added drama, wrap all of the magazine in brown paper before you distribute them, and have people unwrap them when you give the signal to begin.

THE ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION GAME



In a Nutshell

Participants make suggestions for solving a sensitive societal problem—either with or without the protection of anonymity.

Time

15 to 20 minutes.

What You'll Learn

People are usually more willing to express their creative ideas when they can do so anonymously—that is, when the risk of ridicule or punishment is removed.

What You'll Need

You'll need to create two different survey forms—those that protect anonymity and those that don't. You may want to use copies of the forms on pages 38 and 39.

What to Do

Distribute Form 1 (page 38) to half the group and Form 2 (page 39) to the other half. Explain that you're going to be comparing the types of suggestions people make when they must reveal their identities to the types of suggestions they make when they can remain anonymous. (In fact, that's not exactly what this game is about. We'll get to that in a minute.)

Have people list suggestions for reducing crime on our nation's streets. You can propose a different task if you like. Make it relevant to your particular group.

When the forms have been completed, explain that you're not actually interested in comparing the types of suggestions that have been made but rather the *number* of suggestions. Do people make more suggestions—especially on sensitive topics—when their identities are secret?

Have a volunteer collect the forms and compile a quick tally of the number of suggestions made by members of each half of the group. If the group is typical, people in the anonymous half will have made many more suggestions (on the average) than people in the half without anonymity. (In a small group, outlying values can unfairly skew the mean; the more appropriate statistic is the median.)

Lead a discussion about how these results can be applied to improve suggestion systems in the participants' work environments. What is the ideal suggestion system for

encouraging people to express their creative ideas on a regular basis? (See “Tips!” that follow for suggestions.)

Discussion Questions

1. Do people respond differently when their anonymity is assured? How so?
2. Even assuming that people are more honest or creative when they can remain anonymous, a suggestion system that does not allow people to claim their good ideas would surely fail. Why?
3. What's wrong with a suggestion system that requires people to identify themselves?
4. Why are people often reluctant to contribute their ideas to the group?

Tips!

In the workplace, you can boost creative expression by establishing a suggestion system that promotes capturing: an anonymous suggestion system that allows people to claim their ideas later. How you set this up—with two-part numbered suggestion forms, with special email addresses and codes, with a bulletin board system—depends on your particular work environment.

Remember, a new idea is like a gold brick falling from the sky: Everyone wants to catch it, but no one wants to be crushed by it. And all but a few think that it's probably fool's gold, anyway.

Survey (Form 1)
The Anonymous Suggestion Game

Your name (required): _____ Telephone (required): _____

Other contact information: _____

Please list your suggestions below: _____

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Survey (Form 2)
The Anonymous Suggestion Game

Please list your suggestions below:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

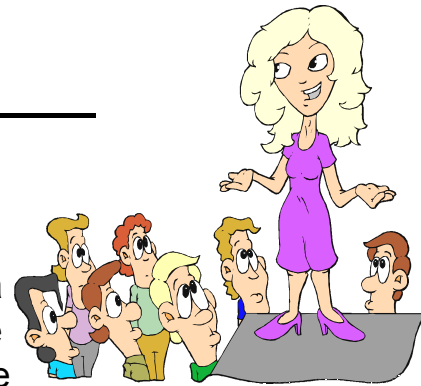
9.

10.

THE AUDIENCE GAME

In a Nutshell

Some volunteers perform a naming task while facing the audience, and others perform the same task while facing away from the audience.



Time

15 minutes.

What You'll Learn

People are rich sources of stimuli. To enhance your creativity, you should surround yourself with interesting and diverse physical and social stimuli—and that includes people.

What You'll Need

You'll need six chairs that you can move around in front of the room, as well as writing materials for your volunteers.

What to Do

Select six volunteers and seat three of them so that they face the audience and the other three so that they face away from the audience. If space allows, place the latter three people so that they can't see each other, either. Give writing materials to all of the volunteers.

Now ask all of the volunteers to list as many new hairstyles as they possibly can in 10 minutes. Everyone has heard of hairstyles like “crew cut,” “shag,” and “afro.” How many new hairstyles can people invent? For each hairstyle, people should write a name for that style, along with a very brief description of the style, or a sketch of that style. Have the volunteers raise their hands high for a moment whenever they add a new style to their lists.

For added drama, have a scorekeeper keep a simple tally on a blackboard or flipchart. The tally should show the number of times people raise their hands in each of the two groups—Audience and No-Audience.

When the time is up, inform the audience of the total count in each of the two groups, elicit some examples of new names from each group, and lead a discussion about the results. The Audience group will normally produce more new names than the No-Audience group, because it's easier to invent new hairstyles when you have a variety of real hairstyles to examine. In other words, new ideas come more easily when you have access to diverse, relevant stimuli.

Discussion Questions

1. Did the two groups (Audience and No-Audience) produce different results? What were the results, and why did they differ?
2. Did the individuals in the two groups behave in a noticeably different way during the task? How so?
3. Social stimuli would normally inhibit performance on a task like this. Why?
4. In a group or team situation in which everyone can participate, social stimuli are often inhibiting. Why would that normally not be the case in the task we just completed?

If You Have More Time

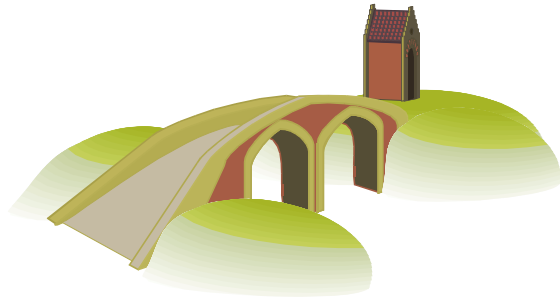
You might try increasing the work period to 15 minutes. Longer time periods should accentuate the difference between the groups.

Alternatives

For a smaller group, you might try using just four or even two volunteers. Instead of having volunteers raise their hand, you might want to have them ring a small bell every time they add a new idea to their list.

BRIDGES TO CREATIVITY

In a Nutshell



Two teams build bridges using foam blocks, having first been given slightly different instructions.

Time

20 minutes.

What You'll Learn

Sometimes very subtle differences in instructions can make a huge difference in creativity. In this game, participants learn the importance of “open-ended instructions” in a team activity.

What You'll Need

You'll need a bucket of 50 lightweight foam blocks, sold commercially under the name “Tub Blocks.” You'll also need two sheets of white legal-size paper, a marker, and a ruler. Two small tables, spaced well apart, should be set up in front of the room. Make one copy of the instructions on page 51, and cut the sheet in half where indicated. The top half will go

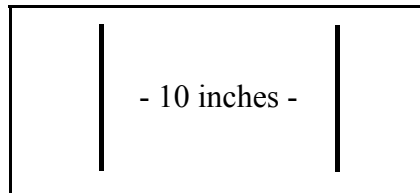
to the Crafty Constructors (Team 1) and the bottom half to the Bodacious Builders (Team 2).

The Tub Blocks, all of which are about 1-inch thick, come in a variety of shapes. You'll need to create two identical sets of blocks, one for each team. In each set, you might want to include the following blocks:

- (2) 6-inch by 1.5-inch rectangles
- (4) 3.5-inch by 1.5-inch rectangles
- (4) 3-inch by 1.5-inch rectangles
- (1) 3-inch square
- (2) triangles
- (2) half-circles
- (2) circles

It isn't critical that you use exactly these blocks or that you use this particular brand. Before you begin the game, however, be sure that you practice building bridges with whatever materials you've decided to employ.

On the sheets of paper, mark two parallel lines, 10 inches apart, as shown at the top of the following page. The space between the lines will be the "river" in the game.



What to Do

Before displaying the materials, appoint two teams—the Crafty Constructors and the Bodacious Builders—with three people in each, and send them out of the room. Appoint a timekeeper.

Now explain to the group that you'll shortly be asking each team to build a series of bridges that span a river. Set up a diagram on each table, and pour the blocks next to each diagram. Explain that you'll be giving slightly different instructions to each team. The Crafty Constructors (Team 1) will get typical, everyday instructions—the kind that imply a limit:

Your task is to use the provided building blocks to span a river, marked by two parallel lines on the sheet of paper on the table. In your final structure, no blocks may touch the space between the two lines. You have a maximum of 10 minutes in which to complete this task.

The Bodacious Builders (Team 2) will get superior instructions, called “open-ended” instructions, the kind that explicitly say that the solution is unbounded in one or more respects.

Your task is to use the provided building blocks to build the widest possible bridge that you can. At a minimum, it must span a river, marked by two parallel lines on the sheet of paper on the table. In your final

structure, no blocks may touch the space between the two lines. You have a maximum of 10 minutes in which to complete this task.

Even though the teams have exactly the same resources, will the open-ended instructions produce superior performance? Will the Bodacious Builders build wider, more creative, more interesting structures than the Crafty Constructors?

Bring the teams back into the room, station them at their respective tables, and give them their written instructions (see page 51). Because it's important that each team not know about the other team's instructions, you mustn't read the instructions aloud, and you won't be able to answer any questions that group members might have. Just get them started, and encourage both teams to keep building until the ten minutes have elapsed.

As soon as one team has completed a structure, use your ruler to get a quick measure of the span of the bridge, and record the measurement on paper. Then knock the bridge down, and ask the team to build another bridge with a different design. Have each team build as many bridges as they can in the allotted time.

Finally, lead a discussion about the effect of open-ended instructions on creative performance. Normally, the Bodacious Builders will build several bridges with spans that exceed the width of the bridge by several inches, whereas the Crafty Constructors will build bridges that are the exact width of the river.

Discussion Questions

1. Did the two teams perform differently? How so?
2. How do open-ended tasks, instructions, goals, and questions differ from conventional (“closed”) tasks, instructions, goals, and questions?
3. How do open-ended tasks improve creative performance?
4. What kind of instructions, goals, and tasks are normally given in your workplace? How might open-ended tasks make a difference in both performance and creativity?

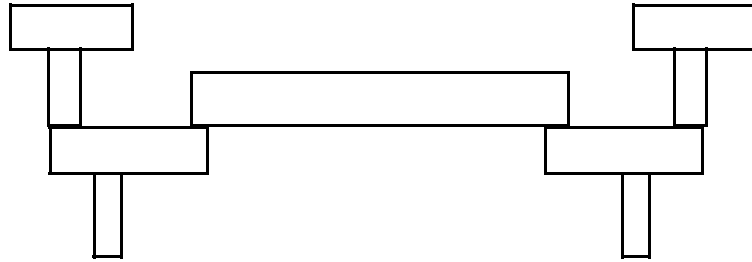
Alternative

This game can be done with individuals instead of teams. The main advantage of using teams is to make more hands available to place the blocks and hold the structure steady during the construction process.

Tip!

There are many, many different designs that will span the river, and some that will go well beyond the banks, as the Bodacious Builders will probably demonstrate. A span of 16 inches is even possible. Here’s one simple design for a

bridge that spans the river. Don't share this with your participants, though. Let creativity rule!



Instructions for the Crafty Constructors

Your task is to use the provided building blocks to span a river, marked by two parallel lines on the sheet of paper on the table. In your final structure, no blocks may touch the space between the two lines. You have a maximum of 10 minutes in which to complete this task.

B-----

Instructions for the Bodacious Builders

Your task is to use the provided building blocks to build the widest possible bridge that you can. At a minimum, it must span a river, marked by two parallel lines on the sheet of paper on the table. In your final structure, no blocks may touch the space between the two lines. You have a maximum of 10 minutes in which to complete this task.