

# THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Our goal at Destination Imagination (DI) is to give students the chance to learn and experience the creative process from imagination to innovation. The creative process is about thinking and doing in no prescribed order. Below are the components of the creative process that our participants experience while solving our Challenges. Some people “do” first and then think about what they have done, while others think first and then initiate action. The process integrates Blooms Taxonomy, the scientific method, 21st century skills, collaborative problem solving, and the stages of practical inquiry and whole child education.

## **Recognize (Stage One)**

### **Becoming aware of a challenge, or opportunity with a domain of interest**

- Possibility thinking; problem finding
- Maintaining a healthy state of mind (alertness, attitude, brain health)
- Fully understanding all the issues or points of the challenge or problem

## **Imagine (Stage Two)**

### **Applying thinking skills to develop ideas for solutions**

- Learning to think flexibly between divergent and convergent processes
- Learning fluency and future thinking

## **Initiate & Collaborate (Stage Three)**

### **Using process and design thinking**

- Taking risks and learning to control behavior
- Working in a collaborative manner
- Learning and practicing interpersonal and leadership skills

## **Assess (Stage Four)**

### **Monitoring progress**

- Sometimes requires starting over or admitting failure

## **Evaluate & Celebrate (Stage Five)**

### **Evaluating results**

- Reflecting on the experience, resources, and teamwork and celebrating the solution

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## CREATIVE THINKING

### The Process Of Developing Ideas And Options To Solve The Challenge

There are five goals for which your team should strive when it is creating ideas:

- **Fluency** is the ability to create as many options as possible.
- **Flexibility** is categorizing ideas, objects and learning from different categories (such as materials, functions or features) and thinking about them in diverse ways.
- **Originality** is creating novel options that are often clever (such as an unusual combination of two objects or ingenious word play).
- **Learning** to use idea-creation tools.
- **Elaboration\*\*** is expanding or stretching an option or idea that builds on the previous thought. (such as listening to others and adding on to their ideas), or creating some detailed options.

\*\*as discussed in Rick Wormeli's *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*

When you utilize idea-creation tools, keep these basic guidelines in mind:

- **Remain Open.** Nothing smothers the free flow of ideas like a sharp critical remark or harsh laughter from another person. To encourage the flow of ideas, make sure no judgmental attitudes are present that make a team member become more concerned with defending ideas rather than creating them. This also counts for self-judgment. Don't stifle your own ideas.
- **State and document all ideas.** It is easier to tone down an idea than to think one up. Encouraging wild or silly ideas encourages team members to be imaginative. Placing a premium on that which initially appears far out encourages team members to expand their thinking.
- **Volume counts.** If there are a large number of ideas to be considered, the chance of finding a really good idea is greater.
- **Hitchhike on the ideas of others.** Creative people can learn to be good listeners. Most of us have built on others' ideas or been reminded of something upon hearing an idea from someone else.

## CRITICAL THINKING

### The Process Of Selecting An Option

When the team has created lots of ideas, it will need to begin to sort through them and decide which ideas merit a closer look. Idea directing involves examining possibilities carefully, fairly and constructively. Teams should then direct their thoughts and actions by:

- Organizing and analyzing possibilities
- Refining and developing promising possibilities
- Ranking or prioritizing options
- Choosing or deciding on certain options and
- Using idea-directing tools to aid in the option selection process

When you use idea-directing tools, follow these basic guidelines:

- **Stay positive.** Don't confuse criticism and critical thinking. Critical thinking should be directed toward guiding beliefs and actions, not just toward attacking ideas or pointing out what's wrong with them.
- **Be thoughtful.** Critical analysis is not just a matter of settling on an idea or course of action as a matter of whim. Knowing and using strategies helps teams direct on options and goals, and also helps prevent conflict.
- **Consider uniqueness.** Direct your ideas into possibilities that provide new and better ways to proceed or move forward.
- **Stay on the path.** It is much easier to direct your critical thinking in productive ways if the goals and objectives are clear. Test progress by asking, "Are we moving closer toward where we want to be? Will these ideas help us move in a positive, constructive direction?"

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROCESS

Before you begin working with your team, it is very important to understand four essential things about managing a Destination Imagination team:

1. **Destination Imagination is a process program** that uses inquiry-guided learning principals to foster creative and critical thinking; encourages teamwork, collaboration and leadership skills; teaches problem solving methods and tools; and honors and develops the individual interests, skills and abilities of all participants. Sometimes Team Managers worry a lot about the tournament and forget to see the important strides that their team members are making on their way to the tournament.
2. **The Team Manager's role is to act as a facilitator throughout the process.** Team Managers can encourage teams to solve their own problems by asking lots and lots of open-ended questions. For example, if a team member asks, "Why won't this gear turn properly?" the Team Manager might answer with, "What are some reasons you can think of that could be keeping it from turning properly?"
3. **Teamwork can be a tricky business.** Every team follows its own progression as it learns to work together, and every step of the progression is necessary. Be aware that some of these steps include conflict and conflict resolution, which are often integral parts of a team's development.
4. **Learning can be fun and rewarding to student teams.**

## TEAM MANAGER TRAINING & DI UNIVERSITY

It is your job as Team Manager to be well-informed and well-trained in how to best present DI to your team and guide them through the creative process. In your Affiliate or Country there are important Team Manager trainings that you should attend. At Team Manager trainings, you will learn not only about the deep philosophy of Destination Imagination and how it has been changing the lives of countless young people, but you will also learn how to lead your team confidently through the creative process. Please make it a point to attend at least one of these trainings. They are essential to your team's success in DI. In addition to in-person trainings, DI University is a useful professional development resource that is available exclusively for Destination Imagination volunteers. Currently, it houses important online training modules for "Rules of the Road" and "Being a DI Team Manager." Additional modules will continue to be added over time. Each module is designed with a one-to-many approach to allow consistency across the DI family, as well as help to establish program standards. Although these online offerings are not designed to replace face-to-face training, they serve as a great knowledge base for anyone getting started.

As a Team Manager, DI invites you to take advantage of this unique opportunity to learn more about the Destination Imagination program. DI University is free and can be accessed at [diuniversity.org](http://diuniversity.org).