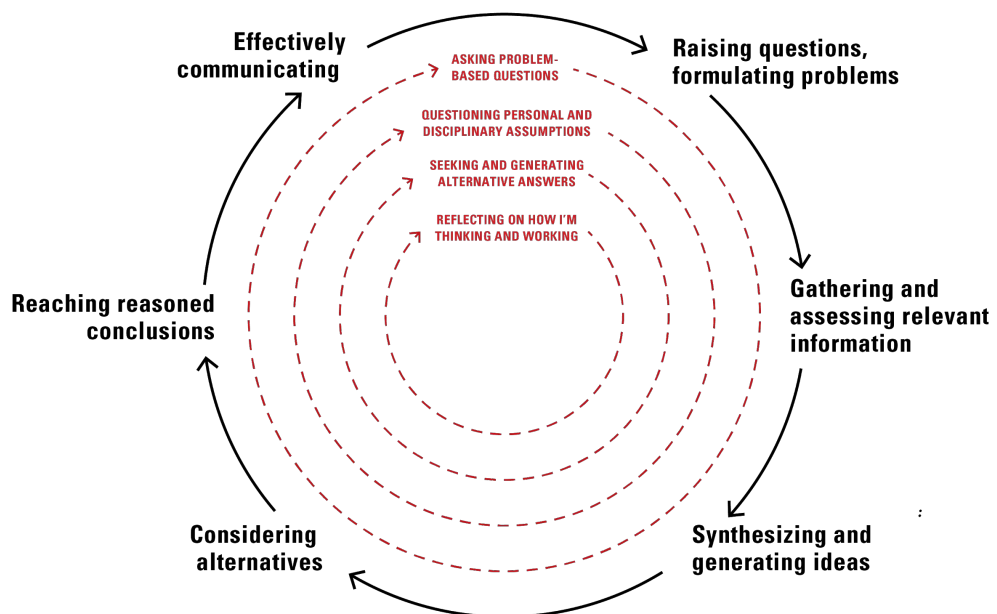


Intellectual Risk Taking Workshop

TH!NK Faculty Workshop
Spring 2018

TH!NK Student Learning Outcomes



Intellectual Risk Taking

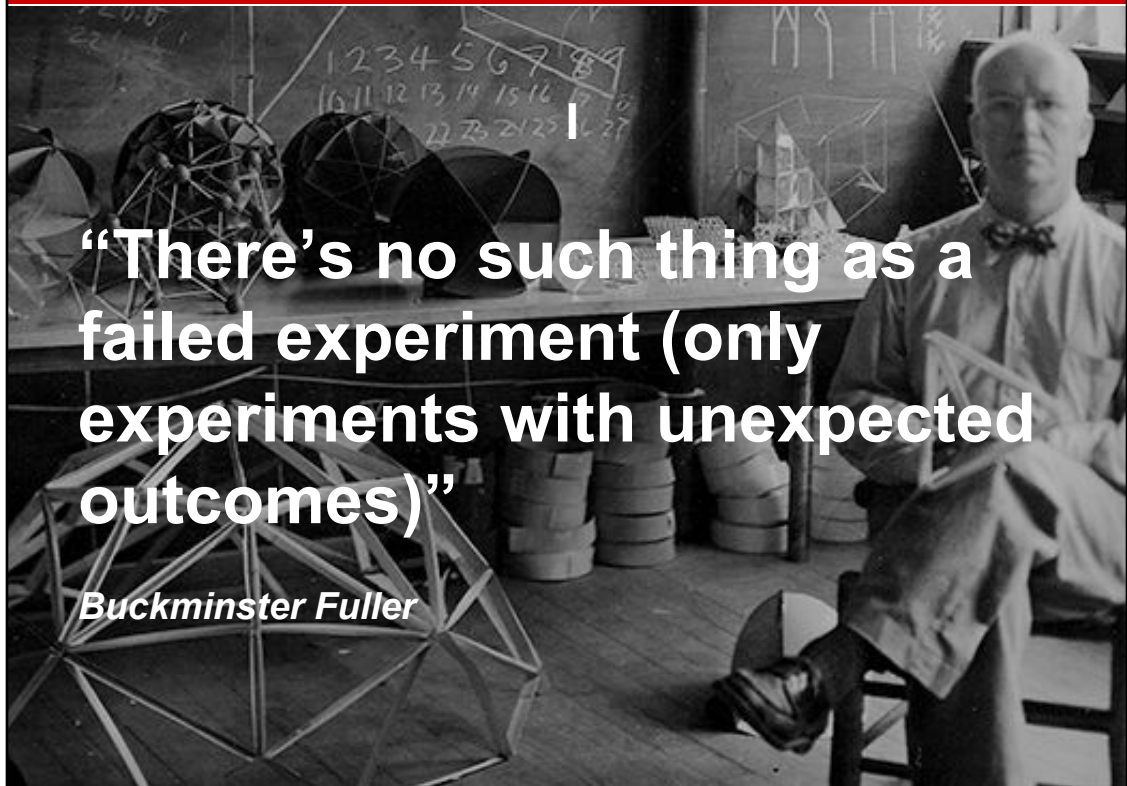


What are some synonyms, related behaviors, or attributes of intellectual risk taking?

Intellectual Risk Taking



1. What does this mean to you (in your discipline, in your classroom)?
2. Is it important (why or why not)?
3. Do you encourage it in your classroom now? How?




“There’s no such thing as a failed experiment (only experiments with unexpected outcomes)”

Buckminster Fuller

Intellectual Risk Taking

Entrepreneurs and innovators generally have a higher **tolerance for risk**. They are more likely to perceive:

- Strengths rather than weaknesses
- Opportunities versus threats
- Potential for performance improvement versus deterioration



Risk taking is a cognitive process and can be learned and refined with practice.

Palick L and Bagby R (1995) Using Cognitive Theory to explain entrepreneurial risk taking: Challenging Conventional Wisdom. "Journal of Business Venturing" 10 (6) pp425-438.

Anticipate, Take, and Manage Intellectual Risks

“Learn to anticipate, take and manage risk” as a learning objective:

- Understand / predict reward or consequence (in both negative and positive terms)
- Learn from and value failure through metacognitive reflections
- Understand “error” as a central part of the learning process
- Encourage informed discussions by acting on reasonable risk/reward assessment

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Intellectual Risk Taking in the Classroom

What are the barriers to risk taking in the classroom (in projects, assignments)?

How we Discourage Intellectual Risk Taking

Barriers to risk taking in the classroom (+ life) are:

- Perception of loss vs. gain
- Frequent progress checks (example: high frequency milestones with expected results/progress)
- Desire for predictable outcomes and objectives
- Fear of failure
- Lack of ownership over decisions
- Lack of time

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- Give students the **freedom to design or define** aspects of their assignment/project.

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- Discuss **case studies / precedents of risk takers** within the discipline whose risks transformed the field.

Fail Early and Fail Often

Experiencing risk inevitably involves experiencing failure.

- Risk in the “safe” environment of the classroom
- Distributed risk taking encourages students to not put all of your eggs in one basket but explore a number of possible and appropriate options.
- Risk taking skills have been shown to improve confidence and resilience to setbacks.

A photograph showing a group of students sitting around a table in a classroom, engaged in a hands-on activity. They are looking at papers and materials on the table. The text is overlaid on the image.

Students who learn to take risks are more RESOURCEFUL, RESILIENT, and EMPOWERED.

Intellectual Risk Taking in your classroom

Most of our disciplines are built on processes and methods which incorporate risk taking because they involve stages of decision making, experimentation, testing, observation and adaptation. However there is evidence that teaching in the classroom often fails to include risk taking by giving prominence to knowledge and understanding rather than inquiry.

1. Come up with a specific example you can use in the classroom that values and practices risk taking:
 - What is the ultimate goal you hope to achieve?
 - What are the barriers to incorporating this specific example into your classroom?

Intellectual Risk Taking in your classroom

Remember to encourage long term informed intellectual risk taking:

1) You need to create a safe learning environment in the classroom for all students!!

2) Provide opportunities where it is OK to fail as long as students learn from their failures!

Information and Resources

Types of intellectual risk range from:

Answering questions/expressing ideas in the classroom

Thinking of creative “wild ideas”

[Watch this video: Intellectual risk taking](#)

[Innovation design in education](#)

[Understanding intellectual risk](#)

[Creating a “safe” learning environment](#)

[The “deep dive”: IDEO](#)

[Marshmallow challenge: fail early](#)

[Celebrating failure](#)