Innovation in the Ensemble Arts
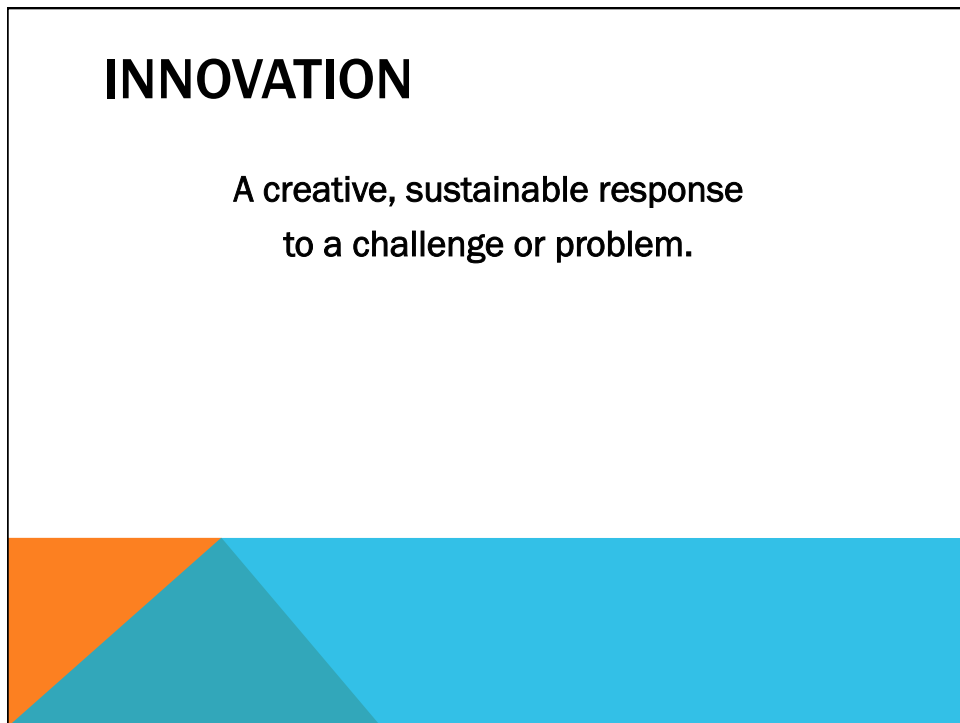
Sustaining Creativity

Ohio Choral Directors Association

Tim Sharp

INNOVATION

A creative, sustainable response
to a challenge or problem.

THE FOUNDATION OF INNOVATION

"...We got (sic) to find a way to make this, fit into the hole for this, using nothing but that."

www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2YZnTL596Q

ETHICS OF INNOVATION

Innovation is Collaborative

Transformational ideas work across various lines of engagement and benefit from the collaborative power resulting from working through tension and diversity;

Innovation is Sustainable

Creativity is fun and interesting, but innovation is sustainable. Sustainability reflects the best use of our resources in the long term;

Innovation is Democratic

Sustainable creative ideas come as a result of real people working with real people, not someone engineering something for someone else;

Innovation is Humanistic

Innovation addresses challenges through human ingenuity, imagination and entrepreneurialism that can come from anywhere;

Innovation is Non-Elitist

Innovative ideas come from many different sources and incubates those ideas toward scalable innovation.

INNOVATION AT WORK

Core Innovation

These include initiatives that are incremental and enhancements to core offerings. This is an area of automatic renewal and staying ahead of the curve.

Adjacent Innovation

These expand the existing organization by leveraging what is already going very well (part core innovation) into adjacent new places or collaborative ventures.

Adjacent innovation usually involves slightly larger risks and additional maintenance.

Transformative Innovation

These initiatives represent those viewed as breakthroughs or creations of entirely new offerings or initiatives, and usually involve even higher risk to accomplish.
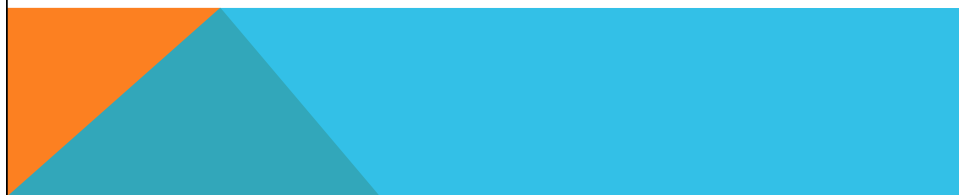
MINDSET FOR INNOVATION

Thinking innovatively requires that we have empathy for those we serve, imagining the world through multiple perspectives.

Thinking innovatively requires integrating parts of a problem toward a breakthrough innovative solution.

Thinking innovatively requires optimistic thinking, knowing that there is at least one breakthrough idea that will be a solution.

Thinking innovatively requires experimentation, or a process of trial and error as we think through various solutions.

Thinking innovatively requires collaborative thinking, drawing from the skills and knowledge of others and not relying solely on oneself.

LEARNING TO INNOVATE

1. Read in as many areas of interest as you have, and read deeply.

2. If you don't already read poetry, start reading it.

3. Ask "Why?" a lot, and look for the simple, transforming answer.

4. Look at other boxes and find out how they operate.

5. Look to collaborative cerebration as a way to generate new facts, ideas, and approaches to challenge.

STEPS TO INNOVATION

1. Understand the people and the climate within which you are working. You have to be able to articulate the challenge, the tensions, and the various constraints on the situation. Current realities are important to grasp from the outset.

2. Observe and listen to those you are working with, and take note of what makes them tick. What behaviors do you observe over and over. What dislikes come to the front over and over. Be able to articulate what they love and what they do not like.

3. Start imagining solutions to what you are observing. Visualize solutions to problems without using road blocks. Build a prototype of a system, a model, or an illustrated example of a "fix" to a real or perceived problem or challenge.

4. Start evaluating and tweaking the ideas that have been generated. Don't lock in an idea immediately, knowing that it will change and will be modified. Plan on improving everything, and know that nothing comes out of the shoot perfect the first time. Watch for what begins to show promise of working, and work for incremental improvements.

5. Beta test the solution to see if it works in a real world setting. This step takes patience and partners willing to take the "look and see" risk of trying something new. Observe the new idea as it takes hold and as it takes shape. Make note of modifications that need to be made along the way.

THE "SECRET SAUCE"

Leonardo Vinci discepilo della sperentia.

Leonardo da Vinci, disciple of experience.

http://quovadisblog.com/2010/01/guest-post-leonardos-notebook/