



Middle School

National FFA Organization

Lesson MS.13

TRYING NEW IDEAS

Unit.

Stage One of Development—ME

Problem Area.

What Foundational Skills Do I Need for Leadership?

Precepts.

A6 Take risks to get the job done.

National Standards.

NL-ENG.K12.8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will ...

- 1 List the benefits of trying new ideas.
- 2 List the disadvantages of having a closed mind.
- 3 Develop an action plan for trying new things.



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Time. Instruction for this lesson: 50 minutes.

Resources

None provided.



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Overhead projector
- ✓ MS.13.TM.A
- ✓ MS.13.AS.A
- ✓ MS.13.Assess—one per student
- ✓ Seeds—larger varieties—beans, peas, corn
- ✓ 3 x 5 index cards
- ✓ Card stock
- ✓ Thin markers, crayons, colored pens, or other colorful writing utensils



Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in bold italics:

- ▶ Comfort zone
- ▶ Creativity
- ▶ Old habits



Interest Approach

Read the following scenario to the students or, if available, place on a PowerPoint slide or transparency.



This story became popular as an e-mail attachment, and given the speed with which these kinds of things travel across the Internet, some of you may have already seen it.

You are driving along on a wild, stormy night. You pass by a bus stop, and you see three people waiting for the bus:

An elderly woman who will die without medical treatment.

An old friend who once saved your life.

The perfect man or woman you have been dreaming about.

Which one would you choose, knowing there could only be one passenger in your car? This moral or ethical dilemma was once actually used as part of a job application. You could pick up the elderly woman because she is going to die, and thus, you should save her first, or you could take the friend because he once saved your life, and this would be the perfect chance to pay him back. However, you may never again be able to find your perfect dream lover. Who would you choose?

The candidate who was hired-out of 200 applicants-had no trouble coming up with his answer.

Before reading the answer, have the students take a minute to write their thoughts. Have three students share their ideas.





What did the candidate say, you might be thinking? This was his response: "I would give my car keys to my old friend and let him take the elderly woman to the hospital. I would stay behind and wait for the bus with the man or woman of my dreams."

Explain that this activity sets up the general thought process of today's lesson. Challenge students to keep those creative and adventuresome juices flowing. Explain that new ideas are around us all the time if we take the time to notice and have the courage to give them a try!

On a writing surface, draw a simple picture of a tree and write the following quote on the tree:

You can't see the good ideas behind you by looking twice as hard at what's in front of you.

-Andrew Mercer

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. List the benefits of trying new ideas.

Place two seeds-larger varieties such as beans, peas, or corn-at each student's place. Give the following instructions:



- Look at the seeds. Think about the steps to plant these seeds so they would have the best chance to grow into strong, healthy plants. Consider details, such as container size, soil type, depth, fertilizer, etc. Find a sheet of notebook paper and fold it in half vertically. On one side of the paper, list the steps to plant the seeds for optimal growth. Use the next few minutes to complete this task.

When finished, have three to four students share how they would plant their seeds. Acknowledge students who volunteer their answers. After examples are given, inform the students that on the other half of the paper, they now have to come up with a completely new way to plant their seeds without using any of the methods or materials described in the first process. Give them a few minutes to complete this second process.

When finished, have three or four students share their new methods of planting their second seeds.

Ask these processing questions:



What was your feeling when you discovered you had to think of a new way to perform a common task?

Did the ideas for planting the seed initially flow better the first time or the second time?

Why do you feel this reaction took place?

Did you find yourself becoming more creative the second time you had to plant your seed?

Were you willing to take more risks the second time? Why?

Use a Go Get It Moment to engage student learning and get the following information. Place 3 × 5 index cards with the five major benefits on them in specific locations around the classroom or other area-the cards can be found in the back of the lesson. Then split the class into five different groups, assigning each group the task of obtaining one benefit. After all five are found, have students regroup and read their cards to the class, discussing each. After all are read and discussed, distribute the handout with all cards on it.



I. Benefits of trying new ideas

- A. Card 1: Enables one to move out of his or her **comfort zone**: a place of being, either physical or mental, in which one feels safe or without worry
 - 1. Leads to open-mindedness
 - 2. One is more willing to listen to ideas of others
 - 3. Promotes a curiosity to try and achieve at a new level
- B. Card 2: More **creativity**: having the ability and power to produce innovative thoughts and ideas
 - 1. Enables one to discover his or her personal style and uniqueness
 - 2. One is able to quickly see new ways of doing things
- C. Card 3: Better final results
 - 1. More than one path to the destination
 - 2. The first new ideas often spark other ideas
- D. Card 4: Break **old habits**: recurring, often unconscious patterns of behavior
- E. Card 5: Earn respect. Few are open to new ideas; you will be an example to others

Praise students for their efforts by verbal acknowledgement or by giving out small rewards such as candy.

On a writing surface, record the following two questions. Challenge the students to think about what they just learned about the benefits of trying new ideas. Explain they have about four minutes to focus their energies into answering these questions in a notebook:



How does trying a new idea help me become a more productive leader?
How is not trying a new idea a disadvantage?

Have a few students share some of their thoughts. Use their second question answers to flow into Objective 2.



Objective 2. List the disadvantages of having a closed mind.

List the following notes on a writing surface or use transparency MS.13.TM.A.

II. Disadvantages of having a closed mind

- A. You do not become a better person on the inside.
- B. It affects the people around you.
 - 1. Your actions and attitude trickle down to everyone around you.
 - 2. Others are less willing to work with you.
- C. Your highest potential is never attained.
 - 1. Your willingness to try new ideas builds upon itself and allows you to recognize your talents.
 - 2. Everyone can stay in his or her safe zone; it takes a leader to try something new.

Objective 3. Develop an action plan for trying new things.

Personal activity: Set-up-Explain that now that they have an understanding of the pros and cons of trying new ideas, they will create an action plan to integrate this knowledge into their lives.

Have students think about three areas of their lives, such as family, church, sports, class, or FFA, in which they would be willing to try new ideas. Be sure each student records the areas on a clean sheet of notebook paper. After students have finished, have them record one new idea in each area they see themselves trying out. Finally, have students identify an accountability partner in each area to help remind them to have an open mind. It could be a fellow student, a friend, a parent, another adult, a pastor, etc.



Think of three areas of your life, such as family, church, sports, class, or FFA, in which you would be willing to try out new ideas. Record those areas on a sheet of notebook paper. For each area, record one new idea you can try out. Record one accountability partner for each area to help you accomplish your goal.

Group activity: When all of their thoughts are recorded, divide the students into pairs and hand each pair a piece of card stock. Have them cut the card stock vertically so each student has a long half of card stock. On this section of card stock, have students use the colorful writing utensils to record the three areas where they would be willing to try out new ideas, the three new ideas, and the name of their accountability partner. Be sure they leave some room on the right-hand side to punch notebook holes in it. Upon completion, three-hole punch it so it becomes a notebook divider that students can refer to as a reminder of this newly acquired knowledge.



Review/Summary

Have students answer the following question in their notebooks: What have I learned about trying out new ideas? Give them one minute to respond. You may ask for a few volunteers to share some answers with the group. As the answers are given, tie each to a point covered in the lesson. If all points are not covered, be sure to go back through the handout and notes by asking questions from each.



► **Extended Classroom Activity:**

Students now have an accountability person to help them remember to try out new ideas. They also have a handcrafted notebook divider!

► **FFA Activity:**

Encourage students to apply open-mindedness, trying out new ideas in FFA activities. Give them an example of how this can be done.

► **SAE Activity:**

Have students review their SAE activities and plans and determine if there are any areas where they can try out a new idea!

✓ **Evaluation**

The attached exams are an evaluation of this lesson.

Answers to Assessment:

1. B
2. D
3. D
4. C
5. A
6. TRUE
7. FALSE
8. TRUE
9. FALSE
10. FALSE



TRYING NEW IDEAS

►PART ONE:

Directions: Please choose the **BEST** possible answer to the following questions.

1. Define comfort zone:
 - A. A state of feeling physically safe
 - B. A place of being, either physical or mental, in which one feels safe or without worry
 - C. The area around one's body in which the person does not want others to enter
 - D. The feeling of comfort that takes place when someone tries a new thought or idea
2. Which of the following are restrictions while in a comfort zone.
 - A. Close-mindedness
 - B. Not willing to listen to others' ideas
 - C. A false sense of one's own ability to achieve at a new level
 - D. All of the above
3. When individuals make excuses why they cannot try a new idea, they are restricting their...
 - A. Comfort zone
 - B. Growth and learning
 - C. Creativity
 - D. All of the above
4. When new ideas are presented, our first reaction is generally...
 - A. Acceptance
 - B. Fear
 - C. Rejection
 - D. Excitement
5. The disadvantage(s) to not having an open mind is/are...
 - A. Lack of growth
 - B. Lack of self-control
 - C. Lack of attitude
 - D. All of the above



Directions: Please choose TRUE if the following statement is true and FALSE if the statement is false.

TRUE FALSE 6. Everyone has his or her own form of creativity.

TRUE FALSE 7. Creativity stops when a new idea is discovered.

TRUE FALSE 8. Generating and trying new ideas create better results even if you disagree.

TRUE FALSE 9. An individual willing to take some risk is stuck in his or her “comfort zone.”

TRUE FALSE 10. Your highest ability can be attained even if you do not try new ideas.

►PART TWO:

Short Answer Essay

1. How can trying new ideas spark my creativity.

2. How can I try new ideas in my life and what are three benefits of doing so.



LIST THE DISADVANTAGES OF HAVING A CLOSED MIND

Disadvantages of having a closed mind

◆ **You do not become a better person on the inside.**

◆ **It affects the people around you.**

→ Your actions and attitude trickle down to everyone around you.

→ Others are less willing to work with you.

◆ **Your highest potential is never attained.**

→ Your willingness to try new ideas builds upon itself and allows you to recognize your talents.

→ Everyone can stay in the safe zone; it takes a leader to try something new.



MS.13.AS.A

Card 1 Move out of your <i>Comfort Zone:</i> a place of being, either physical or mental, in which one feels safe or without worry 1. More open-minded 2. More willing to listen to others' ideas 3. A curiosity to try and achieve at a new level	Card 2 Have more <i>Creativity:</i> the ability and power to produce innovative thoughts and ideas 1. Discover personal style and uniqueness 2. Able to quickly see new ways of doing things
Card 3 Better final results 1. More than one path to the destination 2. The first new ideas often spark other ideas	Card 4 Break <i>Old Habits:</i> recurring, often unconscious patterns of behavior
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