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WHAT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE GREAT IDEAS?

Many people think they could never have great ideas, ideas for inventing something, ideas worth spreading because they are not creative, artsy, or genius. Well, the good news is anyone can have super ideas. Moreover, the interesting thing is that many great ideas come when people do surprisingly simple things.

You would have better ideas if you switched from something ordinary to something extra-ordinary, from something you got used to something new, from a depressant to a stimulant in your life.

So where do good ideas come from? What are the environments that lead to unusual levels of innovation, unusual levels of creativity? What is the somewhat environmental – what is the space of creativity? We have very rich vocabulary to describe moments of inspiration. We have the kind of the flash of insight, the stroke of insight, we have "eureka!" moments, and we have the light bulb moments. All of these concepts, as kind of rhetorically florid as they are, share this basic assumption, which is that an idea is a single thing; it is something that happens often in a wonderful illuminating moment.

An idea is a network on the most elemental level. This is what is happening inside your brain. An idea – a new idea – is a new network of neurons firing in sync with each other inside your brain. It is a new configuration that has never formed before. In addition, the question is: how do you get your brain into environments where these new networks are going to be more likely to form?

We take ideas from other people, from people we have learned from, from people we run into in the coffee shop, and we stitch them together into new forms and we create something new. That is really where innovation happens. And that means that we have to change some of our models of what innovation and deep thinking really looks like. This is one vision of it.

People are notoriously unreliable, when they actually self-report on where they have their own good ideas, or their history of their best ideas. A few years ago, a wonderful researcher named Kevin Dunbar decided to go around and do the Big Brother approach to figuring out where good ideas come from. He went to a bunch of science labs around the world and videotaped everyone as they were doing every little bit of their job. So when they were sitting in front of the microscope, when they were talking to their colleague at the water cooler, and all these things. He recorded all of these conversations and tried to figure out where the most important ideas, where they happened. When we think about the classic image of the scientist in the lab, we have this image – they are pouring over the microscope, and they see something in the tissue sample. And "oh, eureka," they have the idea.

What happened actually, when Dunbar looked at the tape is that, in fact, almost none of the important breakthrough ideas happened alone in the lab, in front of the microscope. They happened at the conference table at the weekly lab meeting, when everybody got together and shared their kind of latest data and findings, oftentimes when people shared the mistakes they were having, the error, the noise in the signal they were discovering. And something about that environment – the "liquid network," where you have lots of different ideas that are together, different backgrounds, different interests, jostling with each other, bouncing off each other – that environment is the environment that leads to innovation.

The new can enter our lives in many different ways, can be very personal, like I meet a new person, I read a new book, or I listen to a new song. Or it could be global, I mean, something we call innovation. It could be a new theory, a new technology, but it could also be a new book if you are the writer, or it could be a new song if you are the composer. In all of these global cases, the new is for everyone, but experiencing the new can be also frightening, so the new can also frighten us. Still, experiencing the new means exploring a very peculiar space, the space of what could be, the space of the possible, the space of possibilities. It is a very weird space, so let us try to get through this space.

It is very difficult to conceive this space, but actually, we have an excuse. It is not so easy to conceive this space because we are trying to conceive the occurrence of something brand new, so something that never occurred before, so we do not have clues. A typical solution could be looking at the future with the eyes of the past, so relying on all the time series of past events and hoping that this is enough to predict the future. But we know this is not working. For instance, this was the first attempt for weather forecasts, and it failed. And it failed because of the great complexity of the underlying phenomenon. So now we know that predictions had to be based on modeling, which means creating a synthetic model of the system, simulating this model and then projecting the system into the future

through this model. And now we can do this in a lot of cases with the help of a lot of data.

A starting point of something is that it has the potential to become a wonderful journey for a scientific investigation of the new, but also a personal investigation of the new. And this can have a lot of consequences and a huge impact in key activities like learning, education, research, business.

So let us look at four simple ways to have super ideas.

One is to have a problem, because ideas are solutions to everyday problems. Richard Branson had a problem. He was stranded in the airport after his flight to Puerto Rico was cancelled. And to solve the problem he got on the phone, called around, chartered a plane, sold tickets to the other stranded passengers, and actually ended up making a profit. The idea for Virgin Atlantic was born.

Secondly, listen. Because ears are Wi-Fi for ideas. Dr. Jean Carruthers was injecting her patient's eyelids with Botox to stop muscle spasms. The patient asked why she did not inject her forehead, as every time the doctor injected the forehead, the patient got a beautiful untroubled expression. Jean listened and had the idea to use Botox to reduce frown lines and wrinkles. And from that one comment a whole new Botox treatment came around that is now used by millions and valued at billions.

Thirdly, look around. To acquire knowledge one must study, but to acquire wisdom one must observe. Always believe your eyes rather than anything else.

And now the biggest secret for super ideas is write down your ideas, because if you do not, they will fly away, never to return. Larry Page said when he was 23, he suddenly woke up thinking what if he could download the whole web and just keep the links. He grabbed the pen and started scribbling out the details and Google was born.

When a really great dream shows up, grab it. So if you are dreaming of a great idea, forget being artsy, or creative or genius, just be yourself, do some really simple things and you too can have super ideas worth sharing.

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TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AS A TREND IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING APPROACHES

In the last decade there have been important innovations in theory, research and classroom experience, which are introducing sound changes in foreign language teaching and represent a challenge to the dominant model. We can say that at the moment two major paradigms coexist: the propositional (structural and functional approaches) and the procedural (task-based and process approaches).

Purpose and objectives. This paper aims at presenting background of task-based language teaching, describing main approaches to task-based language teaching and making recommendations for language teachers regarding how to implement task-based pedagogy effectively.

Task-based language teaching is a student-centered approach to second language instruction. It is an offshoot of the communicative approach, wherein activities focus on having students use authentic target language in order to complete meaningful tasks, i.e. situations they might encounter in the real world and other project-based assignments.