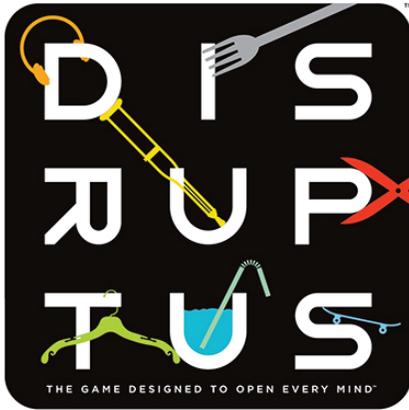# Disruptus: A Game that Leads to Disruptive Thinking

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One of the most important skills our children can develop for this conceptual age is innovation. Innovation takes place at the intersection of creativity, engineering, and entrepreneurship and delivers to the world new and different ways to live and work and play. A new game, Disruptus, has entered the market to help teachers and parents open the minds of the young people to patterns of disruptive thinking. The game asks players to look at objects and ideas and think in innovative ways.

This new game was debuted at the World Innovation Forum in NYC two weeks ago. I was fortunate enough to receive a copy from the president of Funnybone Toys to try out with some of my students (and some of my son's friends!).

The first ones to play were the 3rd grade gifted students at Baden Academy Charter School. Judging each round was gifted teacher, Karie Walaan. The results were hilarious. Pictures of raised electrical lines on poles with transformers and another of a football stadium were turned over with a dice roll of CREATE. The winner invented an entire new arena game that used the electrical line for not only scoring, but game play. A house was DISRUPTED with a holographic room of virtual utopia, and railroad tracks TRANSFORMED into a maglev. What struck me was the games flexibility. Some of the students wanted to work as teams and we increased the time limit to 2 minutes for negotiations. Potential points were lost for speaking during someone else's idea presentation or arguing with your teammates during your presentation. Rule creation became a point of dialog, and a chance to reinforce the concepts taught when students developed their own elevator pitches. We are a rural community, and some of the urban photos needed an explanation to the young audience. The high point for me was in a later class with the students and their use of the word "disruption" to identify and critique elements of the research fellows program they wanted to see change.

The next group to play the game was a band of 11 to 16 year old D&D players gathered for a weekly game. All boys, their innovations included lots of exploding force (crutches become jet packs). The D&D spirit of collaboration was seen when they combined all of their transformations of a parking garage to transform it into a free running, disco dancing, zombie chasing fun for all. They liked the game, comparing it to Apples to Apples, but saw it in a classroom setting rather than a living room of teens or young adults. They took the game at face value and did not consider their innovations beyond the imagination. All of these boys have broached the subjects of innovation and entrepreneurship in their personal lives, attempting small business and science fair projects. I believe the game would serve them in an introduction to these concepts, whether pursuing the Entrepreneurship merit badge of the boy scouts, joining the local Beaver County Youth Entrepreneurship Collaborative, or (as my 15 year old will be next year), taking a 2 semester high school class in entrepreneurship. It is a great icebreaker, fun to play and opens the doors to many conversations.

Luke Williams, author of *Disrupt*, is a NYU scholar and marketing expert who speaks on disruptive thinking and innovation strategy. His TED Talk helped me develop a criteria for judging who "won" the competition of disruptive thinking the game spurred. Williams speaks of a rebellious instinct to discard old clichés and eagerly target situations that are comfortable. He talks of how we are to challenge the status quo and challenges innovators to move beyond simple idea generation and. focus on quality. The process of judging enabled dialog to consider what to do with those ideas after they've been generated.

Disruptus the game had a disruptive sticking effect. Ordinary paperclips, bicycle tires and hammocks spur thoughts of disruption days after the game has ended. It all starts with a wild question, "I wonder what would happen if we."