Synectics

Synectics is a rational approach to creativity and problem solving that is used to solve problems or generate ideas. At its core, it creates a distance from the focal issue that prevents the user from becoming stuck or limited to what is already known about it. It does this through the use of analogies or metaphors that add a new perspective, making the familiar strange, and increasing distance from the problem. Different types of analogies can used for this technique. These include, but are not limited to: **Personal analogy:** The problem is restated and solutions are sought where the user is an element of the problem; **Direct analogy:** Analogous situations are explored; **Nature analogy:** An analogous situation in nature is located; and **Fantasy analogy:** The problem is imagined within the setting of a fairytale. Any ideas or solutions generated using these analogies are then applied to the original focal problem. The advantages of synectics are that it promotes a full understanding of the problem before a solution is proposed, it requires both creative and rational thinking, and can trigger creativity. The technique may be conducted individually or in the context of a group.

Using 'Synectics'

Step 1: The problem is clearly defined, analysed, and understood. Different views of the problem from group members can be discussed at this point. Requirements for the problem to be solved may be presented without details with regard to how this could be achieved.

Step 2: Analogies are applied to the focal problem. A personal, direct, nature, fantasy, or other class of analogy is used to make it more strange and create distance between the problem and user(s) of the technique.

Step 3: A fit is forced between solutions arrived at through the analogies and the actual problem.