Lesson Plan for Chapter 2

*Instant: The Story of Polaroid* by Christopher Bonanos
First Year Book 2014-15

**Prior to Class:**

Have students read Chapter 2 of *Instant* in preparation for this class activity and discussion. The chapter guide online (fyb.umd.edu) will also help them prepare for the class.

**Chapter 2: Development**

‘Development’ takes you through a critical period in American history, and in Polaroid itself – World War II. You see the company grow as it solves problems and designs products for the military. After the war, Edwin Land needed a new product to keep the company he started going. This idea came to him while on vacation with his family when his daughter asked him why she couldn’t see the photograph he’d just taken right away. Instant photography seemed impossible – to fit the process of an entire darkroom into a single photograph – but Land and his teams at Polaroid set out to make it a reality. Within a year, they were looking at the first instant photographs. By 1947, they were ready to debut it to the world and change photography forever.

This chapter tells us about how Polaroid grew as a company based on its ability to identify problems and come up with creative solutions during the war. It also tells us the story of how, when they needed to come up with “the next big thing,” they were able to think of something that seemed impossible and something that the world didn’t even know it needed.

**Class Activity: Creating your Product**

Break into small groups of 3 or 4. As a team, brainstorm a new and innovative idea for a product that anticipates a need before it even exists, like Edwin Land did when he came up with instant photography. It’s okay if your idea *seems* impossible – after all, Edwin Land’s famous words were: **“Don’t undertake a project unless it’s manifestly important and nearly impossible.”**

1. Describe what the need is that you want to fulfill. What is the problem? Why does it exist, and to whom? How might a solution change the way something is done, or someone’s life?
2. Brainstorm solutions. What are one or more potential solutions to this problem? What would the ideal solution or product be able to accomplish?
3. Design your product. Design something that solves the original need your group came up with. Describe what the difficulties of creating this product might be, and talk through some ideas that might make those ‘nearly impossible’ things possible.

4. Diverse teams. What types of diverse team members would you need to create this product, from start to finish?

Discussion

1. What are some other products besides instant cameras and film that have anticipated a need and fulfilled it? Brainstorm a few. Have they changed the way things are done?

2. As a class, talk about the ideas that each group came up with. What are the audiences for each product or idea? Is the need identified universal or specific to a group of people? Are any of the ideas things that they, as students, would actually use in their daily lives? How would these products change the way they did something?

3. Have the groups list the team members they would need to make their product. As a class, discuss their choices – have all the aspects of creating the product been considered? Are there any other types of team members that should be included?