

## The Innovation Class

The 4-H Innovation Class is a way to celebrate creative thinking. It is for intermediate and senior level 4-H members to build on acquired project skills, “break out of the box” and share a creative and innovative exhibit that does not fit well in the existing exhibit classes. Existing exhibit classes are based on the curriculum used by Oregon 4-H. For the most part, exhibit classes are “scripted”—meaning there are tight parameters for what is allowed in the class and what is not. However, we recognize that this unintentionally limits the ability to fully share ones knowledge and skills and that there is more that youth can do within a project area that simply doesn’t fit in the current exhibit class constraints.

An exhibit entered in the Innovation Class will often include a technological component. Because technology is ever changing, the focus for the evaluation of the exhibit will be based on creativity, ingenuity, and the thinking and learning behind the exhibit. The exhibit must be related to the project area but is otherwise open for youth to share their skills, talents, and expanded learning. Examples may include the use of technology to add another dimension to a project such as illumination or interactivity, a creative writing, or a blog sharing learning and project creation adventures. One of the exciting aspects of this class is we really don’t know what the member will exhibit!

### The Explanation Card

Since the exhibit will be judged on creativity, innovation, and the learning process, a comprehensive explanation card will be needed for proper judging—especially if interview judging is not available (as is the case with the Oregon State Fair). Questions on the Explanation Card include why the young person chose to explore and create this exhibit and what resources were used to expand his/her knowledge. Youth are also asked to share about the learning that took place as they created: what challenges they encountered, how they solved those challenges, what they would do differently next time, and how they will apply their new skills and knowledge in their life. If interview judging is used for evaluating these exhibits, use the questions on the Explanation Card for guiding your questions.

### Evaluation Sheet

The 4-H Innovative Exhibit Class Evaluation Sheet mirrors the questions the young person is asked to answer on the Explanation Card. It is divided into three parts: the Exploration Process, the Learning Process and the Reflection Process.



- The Exploration Process focuses on the sources used for this expanded learning, the use of proper vocabulary when answering the questions, and the young person's interest and engagement in the expanded learning.
- The Learning Process focuses on how they used the information gained in the exploration process to develop the exhibit. Often when innovating, the idea does not work as planned and they have to try other techniques, adjust their thoughts, and/or head in a different direction. This is good. We learn best from failure. In fact, the actual exhibit in front of you may not work as intended, but that is OK. It is the learning process that is the focus.
- The Reflection Process is another important process for learning. What does the young person think of the exhibit? Does he/she think it is the final version or are there still tweaks and adjustments that need to be made? And finally, how do they see themselves applying their new knowledge and skills to their life? Has this expanded learning led to career thoughts or to delve further into this area of study?

The Explanation Card and Evaluation Sheet for the Innovation Class is available at:

<http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/special-events/state-fair/cm-family>.

As is true of any new idea, the 4-H Innovation Class may need to go through a tweaking process of its own. We are interested in any and all feedback from you. Please share comments from the members, parents, leaders, and fair superintendents you receive and, of course, your own thoughts and feelings. Comments and feedback are needed in all aspects of this exhibit class including the Explanation Card and Evaluation Sheet.

Please direct feedback to: Lynette Black, State 4-H Project Leader for Family & Consumer Science and Expressive Arts programs. E-mail: [lynette.black@oregonstate.edu](mailto:lynette.black@oregonstate.edu)

