

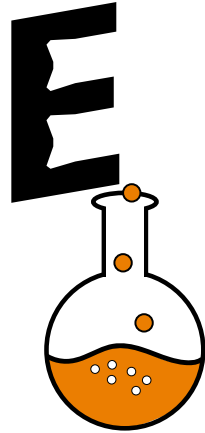


WE-CO MODEL FOR CREATIVE THINKING



What If?

What if?
I wonder if..?
Perhaps we could..?
That would work if...
In what ways can we...?



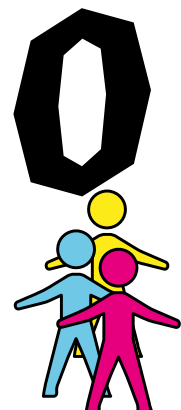
Experimentation

Experiments
Brainstorming
Mind maps



Constraints

Restrictions
Limitations
Must do this
Must not do this



Others

Engage in conversations
Collaborate with others
Take inspiration from what others are doing

As well as critical thinking, creative thinking is an important study skill, especially in creative arts. WE-CO is a useful mnemonic to remember 4 key creative-thinking ideas. Csikszentmihalyi, who gave us the concept of Flow (the state of complete absorption in an activity), defines creativity as a process that "happens when someone does something new that is useful, generative, or influential" (1996). Using these 4 ideas can help to generate and prompt creativity.

W - What If? - This is the main creative thinking questions - you could also pose it as 'I wonder what..?' You can also include "Perhaps we could..." "That would work if..." and "In what ways can we..."

E - Experimentation - Trying out other alternatives, brainstorming ideas. This is useful for identifying as many alternatives as possible. You could then mind-map the ideas, to organise and prioritise ideas.

C - Constraints - Restricting possibilities can aid creativity. Putting a limit on what your creative output must have or must not have or can/cannot be forces us to find alternatives; thus it aids our experimentation. Try doing the opposite of what you normally do. Eno's Oblique Strategies offer very good examples of constraints.

O - Others - Engage in conversations- for ideas, inspiration, and creativity. Take inspiration from what others are doing - try doing the opposite of what others are doing. Collaborate with others. Remember that other resources, such as books and websites, can be 'collaborated' with.

When you are creating something (music, writing, visual art etc.), consider this model and see how one of the 4 ideas could help you to try something new or discover new pathways to creativity.

Also consider these ideas when you are writing an essay or conducting research for your studies or trying to solve a problem in your everyday life.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996) Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention. New York: Harper Perennial.