

BSBCRT301A

Develop and extend critical and creative thinking skills

Unit Descriptor

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to develop the habit of thinking in a more creative way.

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

Employability Skills

This unit contains employability skills.

Application of the Unit

This unit applies to individuals who need to develop and extend their critical and creative thinking skills.

Creative thinking involves looking at things differently, musing, testing, experimenting and challenging existing thought patterns.

Creative thinking can take place anywhere - at home, at work, lying in bed at night, in the shower or on the bus. It can be applied to any type of issue or situation. When used effectively it can assist with the improvement of existing, or the development of entirely new or innovative services, products or processes. Sometimes creative thinking may pay off in a seemingly unconnected way at a future time and in an apparently unrelated context.

Creative thinking can be learnt and applied through thoughtful application of skills related to observation, analysis, reflection, problem solving, evaluation and critical appraisal.

Effective use of creative thinking skills opens up new opportunities for individuals, businesses and communities.

Unit Sector

No sector assigned

ELEMENT

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

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| 1. Develop a questioning mindset | 1.1 Develop the habit of asking questions from different perspectives
1.2 Take responsibility for exploring a variety of information sources to provide relevant answers to own questions
1.3 Sort through information and ideas to identify the central questions, issues and challenges
1.4 Challenge preconceptions and assumptions to determine actual constraints in defining a problem for resolution |
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2. Generate ideas and responses
 - 2.1 Explore and use a range of **creative thinking techniques** to generate ideas and responses
 - 2.2 Muse on, play around with and have fun with ideas in relation to a perceived objective
 - 2.3 Identify and challenge **blockers to creative thinking**
 - 2.4 Consider and explore realities beyond the current situation
 - 2.5 Evaluate, and where appropriate, challenge **existing boundaries** to determine perceived or actual constraints
 - 2.6 Show willingness to take **risks with ideas and thought processes**
 - 2.7 Look around in **familiar and unfamiliar places** for new inspiration and habitually record observations, experiences, ideas and reflective thoughts to broaden personal knowledge base
 - 2.8 Acknowledge and accept the opportunity for revelation when least expected
 - 2.9 Identify connections and associations from things that seem unconnected
3. Challenge, test and re-invent ideas
 - 3.1 Identify, interrogate and challenge the assumptions behind ideas
 - 3.2 Experiment with variations, and explore and challenge a range of different solutions and ideas
 - 3.3 Consciously change perspectives, and evaluate ideas and situations in new ways
 - 3.4 Where appropriate, involve others in ideas and how they might change or be improved
4. Enhance creative thinking skills
 - 4.1 Consciously challenge and question own thought patterns and ways of responding to work and life situations
 - 4.2 Identify and take opportunities to self-assess and to learn about new ideas and different ways of thinking
 - 4.3 Take opportunities to practise and experiment with creative thinking techniques across work and life situations
 - 4.4 Pro-actively talk to others about ways that new ideas and patterns of thinking can be encouraged and developed

REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level, required for this unit.

Required skills

- creative thinking skills to participate effectively and actively in a range of creative thinking activities
- literacy skills to explore and analyse information dealing with potentially complex concepts from a wide range of sources
- problem-solving skills to tease out central themes and issues, and to respond with a range of ideas and solutions
- reflective learning and self-management skills to question and challenge own skills and practice, to identify and access learning opportunities, and to be prepared to learn new things in unfamiliar areas.

Required knowledge

- common blockers to creative thinking, both from an individual and organisational perspective
- definitions, concepts and history of creativity at an overview level
- different creative thinking techniques and how they work, including daydreaming and mental wandering, wishful thinking, use of metaphors and analogies, trigger words, morphological analysis, brainstorming visualisation, mind mapping, lateral thinking games, Edward de Bono's six thinking hats, making associations and storytelling
- how creativity applies everywhere, not just in traditionally 'creative' contexts
- impacts of creative thinking on individuals, communities and businesses
- techniques for filtering to process diverse information
- ways of extending and developing individual creative thinking skills.

RANGE STATEMENT

The range statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Bold italicised wording, if used in the performance criteria, is detailed below. Essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) may also be included.

Questions may include:

- are there any boundaries I need to consider?
- are there new ideas we can bring to this situation?
- how could I solve this problem?
- is there a different way of doing this?
- what am I or others trying to do?
- what do I need to do to make this better?
- what extra information do I need?
- what is missing?
- what is required?
- who do I need to talk to about this?
- why is this so?

Different perspectives may be those of:

- clients or customers
- family members
- friends
- funding bodies
- general public
- history
- organising committees
- regulatory authorities
- self
- specialists or experts
- supervisors or managers
- work colleagues

Creative thinking techniques may include:

- brainstorming:
 - stop and go
 - sequencing
 - buzz session
 - bulletin board
 - computer-aided
- daydreaming and mental wandering
- Edward de Bono's six thinking hats
- ego alter or heroes
- graphic organisers:
 - visual maps
 - webbing
 - concept fans
- lateral thinking games
- making associations
- mind mapping
- morphological analysis
- storytelling
- sub-culture surfing
- trigger words
- use of metaphors and analogies
- vision circles
- visualisation
- wishful thinking
- word salads

Blockers to creative thinking may be:

- cultural
- emotional
- environmental
- family
- ideas and perceptions about how we should behave, such as:
 - play according to the rules
 - don't ask questions
 - don't be silly
 - do as you're told
 - be practical
 - (taken from Lotherington 2003: Flicking Your Creative Switch)
- intellectual
- peer pressure
- perceptual
- risk aversion
- 'way it's done round here'

Existing boundaries may relate to:

- available resources (human, financial, physical)
- established tradition or practice in a given field of activity
- communication protocols
- procedures and processes
- specifications
- unspoken agreements about who does what and how
- work conditions

Risks with ideas and thought processes might involve:

- accepting the limitations of one's own knowledge or capacity
- challenging established authority
- challenging the continuation of current ways of doing things
- changing the rules
- exposing oneself or others to possible criticism
- facing personal fears and apprehensions
- letting go of control
- radically changing long established tradition, practice or norms
- taking financial risks
- taking self or others outside of a comfort zone

Familiar and unfamiliar places may include:

- colleagues
- community groupings
- friends
- hardware stores
- information sources with little direct link to the question at hand
- journals
- junk stores
- libraries
- museums
- recycling yards
- shopping centres
- websites
- workshops

EVIDENCE GUIDE

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge, range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Training Package.

Overview of assessment

Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit

Evidence of the following is essential:

- active participation in a range of creative thinking activities, including ability to ask relevant questions and to generate a range of ideas in response to a given situation or issue
- understanding of creativity and creative thinking at a basic level, including its impact and importance for individuals, communities and businesses
- knowledge and application of different creative thinking techniques and processes to a range of situations.

Context of and specific resources for assessment

Assessment must ensure:

- interactions with challenges, situations and scenarios to which creative thinking may be applied (usually this would involve interactions with others to reflect the nature of the creative thinking process).

Method of assessment

A range of assessment methods should be used to assess practical skills and knowledge. The following examples are appropriate for this unit:

- direct questioning combined with review of portfolios of evidence and third party workplace reports of on-the-job performance by the candidate
- direct observation of the candidate participating in collaborative creative thinking activities
- evaluation of ideas generated by the candidate (with or without others) and of the processes used to generate and test those ideas
- evaluation of a presentation made by the candidate articulating the process of developing ideas or pieces of work, plus evaluation of candidate debating and discussing ideas with others
- evaluation of a (non-computerised) game developed by the candidate, played with others, challenged and re-invented
- oral or written questioning to assess knowledge of creative thinking techniques, concepts and definitions of creativity.

Guidance information for assessment

Creative thinking always occurs in a specific context. Therefore holistic assessment with other units relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role is highly recommended. Assessors must, however, retain a strong focus on the creative thinking skills as described in this unit.