Mastering Creative and Critical Thinking

Emma Sue Prince, BA, PGCE MBA

Author, Public Speaker, Trainer,
7 Skills Expert

Pearson

Audience Poll Question

In 2024, what do you think is the most important skill we need? (Multiple choice response)

- Innovation
- Adaptability
- Ability to manage uncertainty
- Inner strength
- Collaboration
- Intellect

What we'll be covering today:

Segment 1: The skills we need for today's world

Segment 2: What frogs can teach us about critical thinking

Segment 3: Developing a critical and creative thinking mindset

Segment 4: Barriers to critical thinking

Segment 5: Boosting your critical and creative thinking skills every day – both you and your team

Segment 1 - The skills we need for today's world

- What is critical thinking?
- What this skill means for our world today
- The kinds of skills we need right now
- How to succeed
- What is creative thinking?
- Creative and critical thinking – two sides of the same coin

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

"As we grapple with pandemic-charged change in business and permacrisis, as a society we've become more fractured, more divisive, and more vulnerable.

*What we **don't know** is the key step on the road to insight, competitive advantage, and community peace."*

- Adam Grant – Think Again

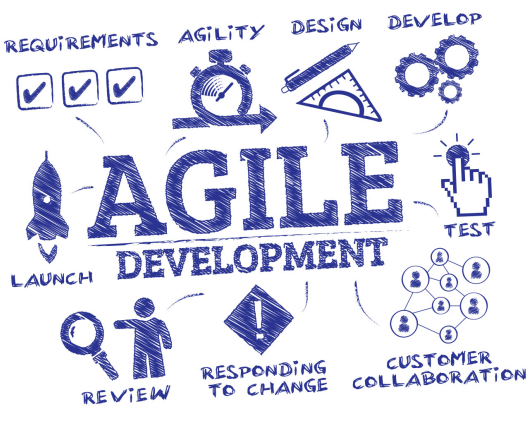
We need to challenge our inbuilt assumptions and thinking much much more…..

The skills we need for today's world

Unpredictability, global uncertainty, mass information all impact our ability to truly think critically.

Creativity is more important than ever!

FUTURE SKILLS



Pearson

FUTURE SKILLS – How to succeed

Understand the political dimension of the workplace

Gain a range of experience and stretch yourself

Demonstrate skill

Perform and deliver

Be useful

Be lucky

Be noticed, be visible, be known

Gain support and widely network

Know what's going on – be there

Get a mentor – know your way around

Critical Thinking Skills for NOW

Being able to handle huge amounts of data

Discerning between fact, fiction and opinion

Taking TIME to absorb information

Being super aware of our sources

Understand our own natural barriers to thinking critically

Asking A LOT more questions!

Not being swayed by every new tidbit of info

Taking time to truly reflect

Listening and being present

Slowing down

Not wasting time on pointless argument

Engaging in good debate

Reading from multiple sources

Able to manage distraction

CRITICAL THINKING
CREATIVE THINKING
COLLABORATIVE THINKING

Pearson

WHAT IS CREATIVE THINKING?

Pearson

Creativity and Critical Thinking

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN....

Pearson

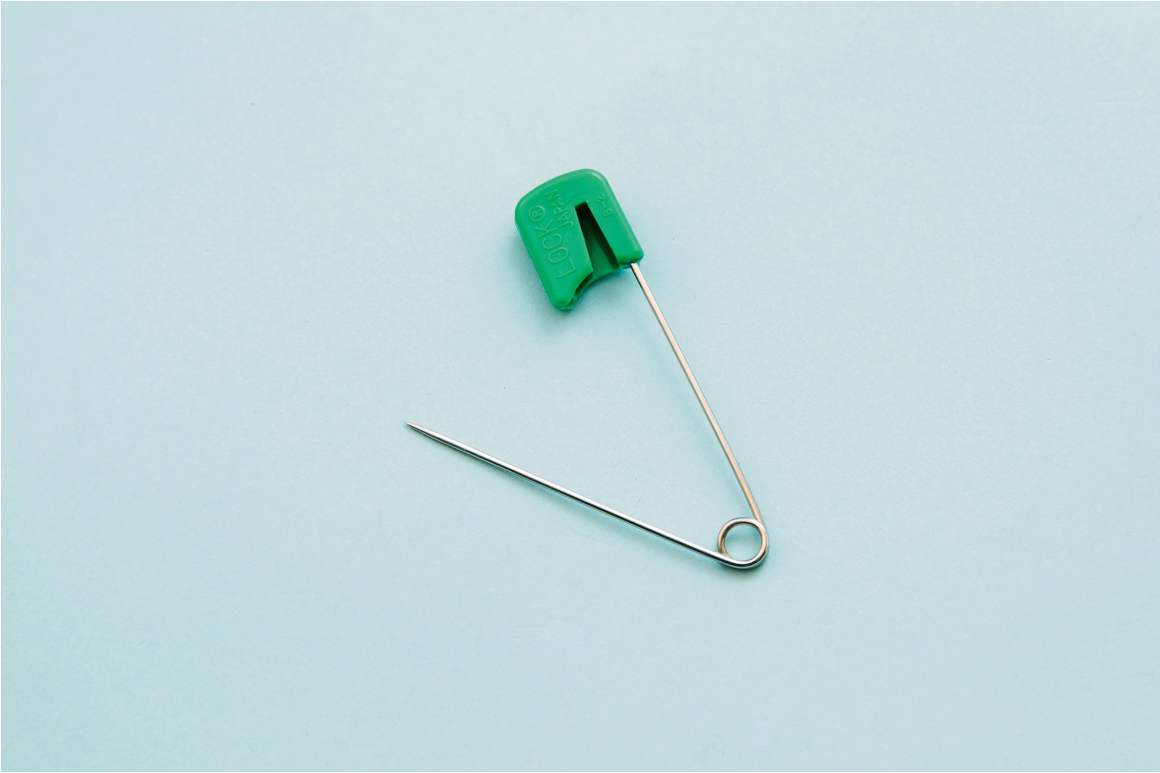
Audience Poll Question

Where do you have your most creative ideas? (Multiple choice response)

- In the shower
- Walking outside
- At my desk
- When I wake up in the morning
- When I'm working
- When I'm not working

TEST YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

Pearson



Pearson

Pearson

NOW SCORE YOURSELF:

FLUENCY – the number of alternative uses for the object

ORIGINALITY – how unusual were your choices – examples of thinking differently?

FLEXIBILITY – the range of different ideas and alternative uses

ELABORATION – level of detail and development of the idea

Reference: J.P. Guilford 1967

How did you do?

Were you able to come up with ideas easily?

Thinking creatively boosts your ability to be *proactively problem-solving* because you come up with solutions and ideas and are more open to new things or ideas you may have previously discounted.

Get into the habit of finding different ways to look at problems and situations, allow creativity to emerge and be proactive with obstacles and day-to-day challenges.

TIPS TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

make time and space for it

Pearson

TIPS TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

make time and space for it

collaborate with others

Pearson

TIPS TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

make time and space for it

collaborate with others

play more

Pearson

TIPS TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

make time and space for it

collaborate with others

play more

create restrictions

Pearson

TIPS TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

make time and space for it

collaborate with others

play more

create restrictions

nurture a growth mindset

Pearson

TIPS TO BOOST YOUR CREATIVE SKILLS

make time and space for it

collaborate with others

play more

create restrictions

nurture a growth mindset

be bored

Pearson

Pearson

TIME FOR Q&A

Segment 2 - What frogs can teach us about critical thinking

- Slow boiling pots
- Our natural biases
- 4 ways to reduce bias
- How to think again

What frogs can teach us about critical thinking

Pearson

The biases that stop us from changing course

First instinct fallacy

Desirability bias

Confirmation bias

Binary bias

What are YOUR slow boiling pots?

4 ways to reduce bias

Teach yourself to be more aware

Question others (and yourself)

Creating inclusive meeting practices

Be willing to unlearn

CRITICAL THINKER CHARACTERISTICS:

objective

logical

seeking evidence

collaborative

Critical thinkers make better business decisions because they collect more information, analyze it thoroughly and come to a logical conclusion.

HOW TO THINK AGAIN

THINK LIKE A SCIENTIST

CREATE LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Pearson

BE OPEN ABOUT RETHINKING YOUR OWN FUTURE

SEEK OUT INFORMATION AGAINST YOUR OWN VIEWS

VALUE CURIOSITY AND LEARNING

Pearson

BREATHE, STRETCH AND TAKE A BREAK

Segment 3 - Creating a critical and creative thinking mindset

- Being aware of closed thinking
- How to use critical thinking questions
- and more curiosity
- Asking better questions
- Tapping into creativity

Pearson

“I would like to replace our archaic purchasing and supply system with an online store"

Pearson

"It costs too much"

"Don't rock the boat"

"Top management won't buy it"

"That won't work here"

"We don't have the time/resources"

"It's too much trouble to change"

"We've always done it this way"

Pearson

USING QUESTIONS AND CURIOSITY

What types of questions could you ask?

What sorts of questions are good ones?

How do I know?

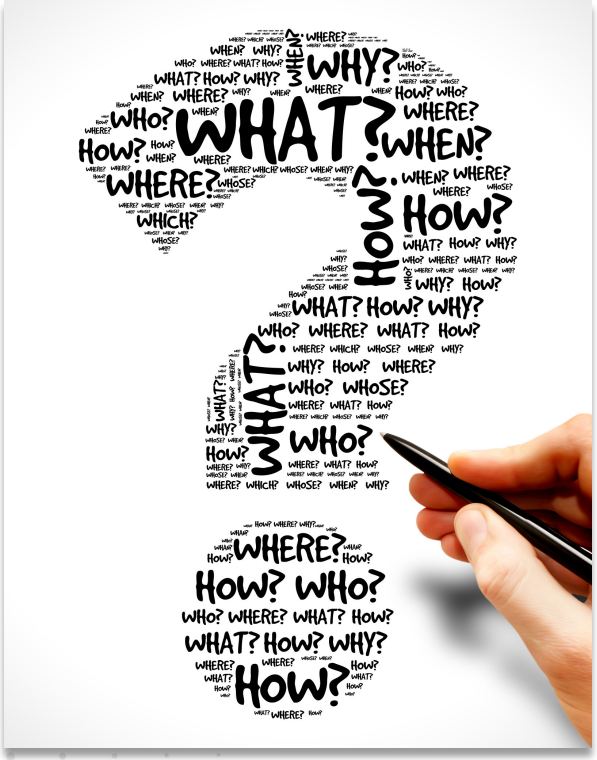
Is there another perspective?

What are other ways of looking at this?

What assumptions have I/you made?

Why
Why
Why??

Pearson



HOW TO ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

- Hold your hypothesis loosely
- Listen more than you talk
- Leave your queries open-ended
- Consider the counter-intuitive
- Stew in a problem
- Ask the hard follow-up questions

TAPPING INTO A CREATIVE MINDSET

5 CORE ATTITUDES OF CREATIVE PEOPLE

CAN YOU BRING THESE ATTITUDES INTO YOUR BEHAVIOUR AND DAY-TO-DAY ACTIONS?

Flexibility

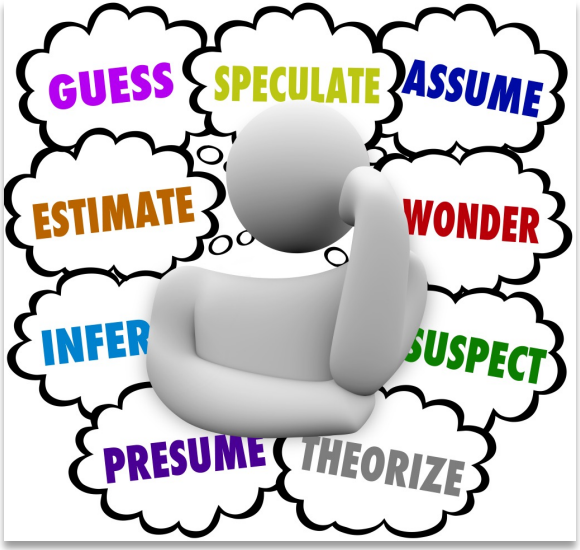
Sense of curiosity

Positivity

Motivation and determination

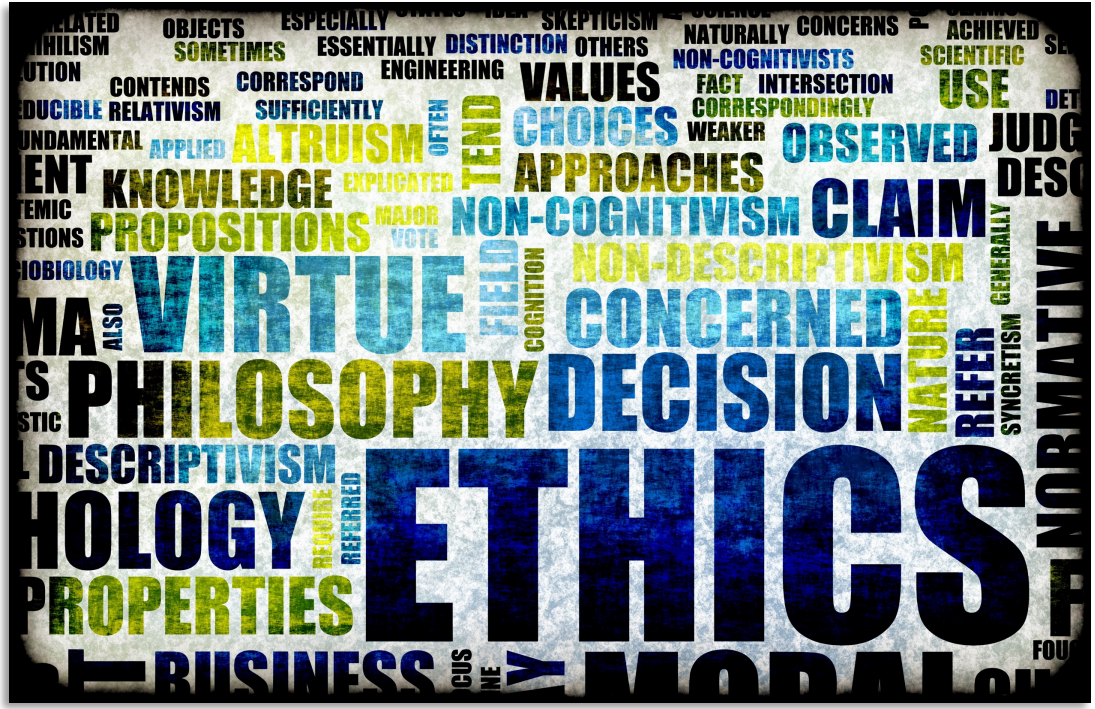
Willingness to take risks

Segment 4: Barriers to thinking critically



MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

CONFIRMATION BIAS

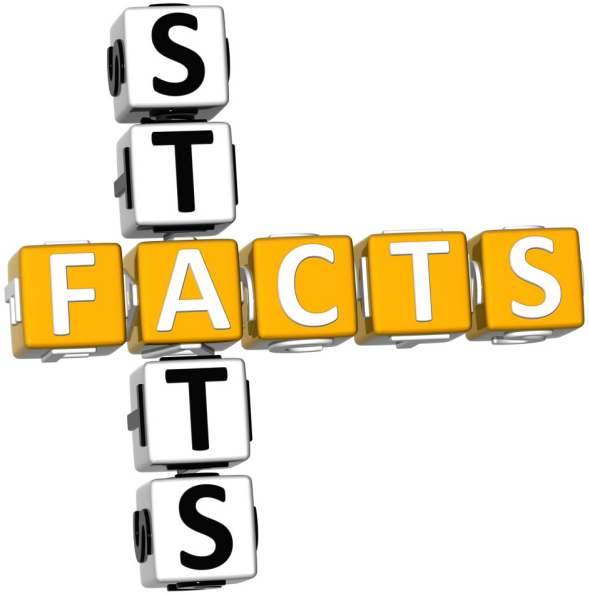


FILLING IN THE GAPS

TRUSTING HEARSAY

Pearson

NOT DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN FACTS AND OPINIONS



WHAT IS THE BIGGEST BARRIER OF ALL?

Pearson

WHAT IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST BARRIERS OF ALL?

A HUGE BARRIER TO US BEING ABLE TO THINK TRULY CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY IS

OUR INABILITY TO FOCUS

UNDERSTANDING DISTRACTION

INTERNAL

- mind wandering
- worry
- future
- past

EXTERNAL

- other people
- noise
- interruptions

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Start your day with something meaningful

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Start your day with something meaningful

Switch off notifications

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Start your day with something meaningful

Switch off notifications

Set boundaries

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Switch off notifications

Start your day with something meaningful

Quit multi-tasking

Set boundaries

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Start your day with something meaningful

Switch off notifications

BE present

Quit multi-tasking

Set boundaries

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Switch off notifications

Start your day with something meaningful

BE present

Quit multi-tasking

Set boundaries

Prioritize

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Switch off notifications

Start your day with something meaningful

BE present

Quit multi-tasking

Set boundaries

Take breaks

Prioritise

MANAGING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Switch off notifications

Start your day with something meaningful

BE present

Quit multi-tasking

Set boundaries

Set up your space

Take breaks

Prioritise

Pearson

TIME FOR Q&A

BREATHE, STRETCH AND TAKE A BREAK

Segment 5 - Boosting critical and creative thinking every day

- Recapping some practical tips
- Cultivating flexibility to help you adapt to change more easily
- Lessons from a brain surgeon on thinking more smartly
- What’s one thing?
- Final Q&A

- Seek out ideas – old and new
- Be open to trying out new approaches
- Notice bias, barriers and assumptions
- Ask a lot more questions
- Take action *towards*
- Be curious and observant
- Reflect more
- Read more (multiple platforms)

Brain flexibility that helps you ADAPT to change

COGNITIVE

Alter everyday routines
Seek out new experiences
Choose to think creatively Don't always take the easy way

EMOTIONAL

Be willing to experience emotion
Be open and curious

DISPOSITIONAL

Tolerate ambiguity
Letting go of limiting/fixed beliefs

6 ways to get your brain to think differently

Try learning a new language

Let your mind wander

Build your neuroplasticity

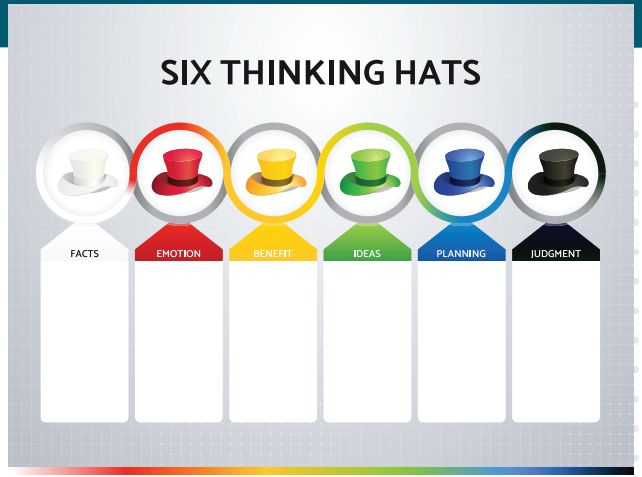
Get more sleep

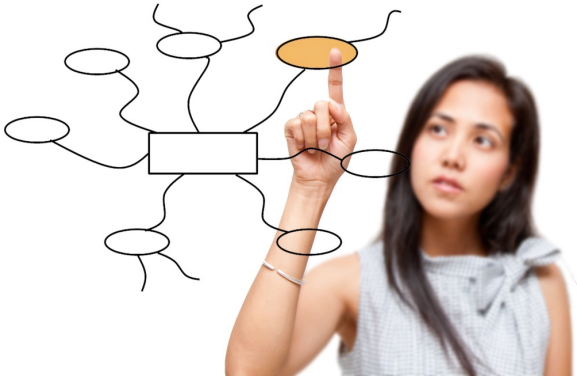
Age your brain well

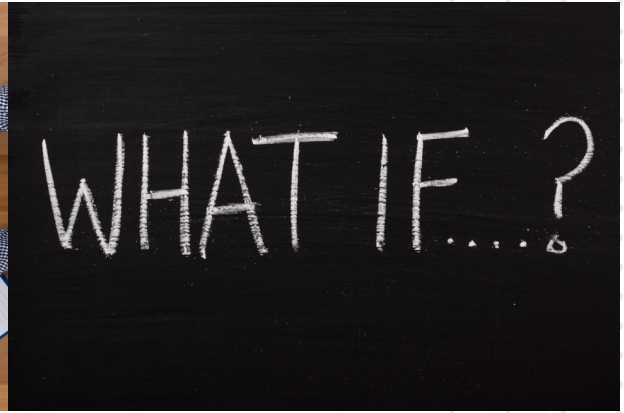
Breathe differently

Pearson

Tools to try in team sessions







Pearson

WHAT'S ONE THING.....?

Pearson

Q & A

Pearson

THANK YOU!

REMEMBER:

- TODAY is the start of sharpening these skills
- USE the tools and ideas as soon as you can

A**ND**

- DO provide feedback on this session – this is very valuable and helps inform future sessions.