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SECTOR SKILLS ALLIANCES

Mu.SA: Museum Sector Alliance

575907-EEP-1-2016-1-EL-EPPKA2-SSA

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***W.4.3.1.B THE ATTITUDES OF A
CREATIVE THINKER***

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Module:	<i>Creative Thinking skills</i>
Unit:	<i>What is creative thinking?</i>
Learning Object:	The attitudes of a creative thinker
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Scientific Reviewer:	Eleni Damianou
Abstract:	In this learning object will be presented the main attitudes of a creative thinker. A creative thinker is: curious, optimistic, imaginative, risk-taker, knowledgeable, flexible and open-minded.
Keywords:	Creative thinking, creative thinker attitudes, innovation, creative potential, problem-solving, thinking outside the box



The document created in 2018 for the project Mu.SA – Museum Sector Alliance, funded under the Erasmus+/KA3 programme (project number 575907-EEP-1-2016-1-EL-EPPKA2-SSA).



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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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Layout design:

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Aim and objectives

The aim is to explore and understand the main attitudes of a creative thinker.

Learning outcomes

After studying this resource, you will be able to: identify at least three attributes of a creative thinker.

Keywords

Creative thinking, creative thinker attitudes, innovation, creative potential, problem-solving, thinking outside the box.





Figure 1 © Ana Carvalho

What are the attitudes of a creative thinker?

Having had the opportunity to reflect on what creative thinking means and its importance as a problem solving skill, it is time to explore the positive attitudes that make you a **creative thinker**.

From Robert Harris "Introduction to Creative Thinking" and from Linda Norris and Rainey Tisdale book "Creativity in Museum Practice", we gather some ideas about the positive attitudes of a creative thinker.



A creative thinker is...

- **Curious**

A creative thinker wants to know things just for the sake of knowing them. Knowledge is often useful in unexpected ways.

The more you expose yourself to new information more likely you are to burst your creativity. Often creativity arises from combining information from different sources and domains. For a museum professional this means to be open to learning in the broadest sense, whether inside the museum field, in a specific expertise, or outside museums. Try to diversify your learning and be open to make unexpected connections.

A creative thinker asks questions. What are the reasons behind each decision, whether an exhibition, an educational programme, an event or a digital strategy? Why this choice and not the other? And why not this way or the other way?

A creative thinker challenges assumptions. What are the assumptions behind ideas, projects, problems, policies, strategies or rules? For example, museums are strongly rule-driven: don't touch objects, no photos, no food and drink, be silent, opening hours are 10:00 to 18:00, and so on. Some assumptions are quite necessary and consistent, but others are not. What are the rules that are absolutely necessary? And which assumptions can be reframed or could be even (strategically) broken? When breaking down some assumptions often come new ideas or solutions to embrace.

- **Optimistic**

A creative thinker sees the good in the bad. Even in the worst solutions there is something useful to learn about.

A problem can also be a solution. What can be seen as a problem for one person might be a solution for someone else, or it can be useful or applied in a new way at your museum.

A creative thinker sees problems as challenges. Unwanted problems often come up in our daily museum practice, either we expect them or not. They are not necessary bad; they might lead to better solutions or improvements. Be open to change your work methods, be flexible. Problem solving can be fun, educational, helpful and rewarding.

- **Risk-taker**

A creative thinker embraces risk-taking. Exploring problem-solving, new ideas, solutions and strategies require thinking outside the box and often require leaving the comfort zone.

- **Flexible, imaginative and open-minded**

A creative thinker is comfortable with imagination and welcomes unthinkable or strange thoughts outside the usual patterns; is not afraid of changing work methods and challenge conventional ways of museum practice.

- **Don't give up easily**

Creative thinkers embrace failure as part of the creative process. Creativity and problem solving require hard work, energy and time. There is no fast and easy formula. Creative thinkers try again and again, they often experiment. They learn the lesson of what works, what doesn't work, and why, they see failure as opportunities - they persevere. In sum, creative thinkers keep on going and learn from failure.

Remember that talking about failure and mistakes about the lessons you learn is fundamental. For example, in the last editions of the American Alliance of Museums conference the session "Mistakes were Made" was created. Museum professionals are welcome to share their mistakes as a way to de-stigmatize failure. As said in the 2018 edition: 'Discover that admitting large-scale mistakes isn't a sign of weakness but of professionalism. [The aim is to] reflect on what we, as a field, are doing to encourage or suppress blunt discussion of mistakes that we (and our museums) make.'

In brief, a creative thinker is curious and knowledgeable, optimistic, risk-taker, imaginative, flexible and open-minded, and don't give up easily.

Do share your opinions with us and your fellow learners about what you have learned. Do you have other ideas about the attitudes that a creative thinker should have?

List of references

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Glossary

Creative thinker: is curious and knowledgeable, optimistic, risk-taker, imaginative, flexible and open-minded, and don't give up easily.

