

CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE THINKING

A. *EMOTIONS MANAGEMENT* – identify and manage one's emotions and behaviour.

1. Recognise and accurately label emotions and how they are linked to behaviour, demonstrating control of impulsive behaviour.
2. Describe a range of emotions and the situations that cause them, describing and demonstrating ways to express emotions in a socially acceptable manner.
3. Analyse factors that create stress or motivate successful performance and apply strategies to manage and overcome these situations.
4. Analyse how thoughts and emotions affect decision making and responsible behaviour, generating ways to develop more positive attitudes.
5. Evaluate how expressing one's emotions in different situations affect others and how positive attitudes influence others.

In order to understand to what extent emotions influence behaviour, it is important to develop emotional intelligence skills. What is emotional intelligence? Emotional intelligence is not only the ability to recognize and understand your emotion, but to realize how your emotions affect people around you. Emotional intelligence also involves your perception of other peoples' emotional state.

Experts claim that there is a list of “basic” emotions which have been passed on to us from our ancestors. The following classification of emotions is based on the research of Paul Ekman:

Anger: Anger may have physical correlations such as muscular tightening, increased heart rate and levels of adrenaline. Some view anger as an emotion which triggers part of the fight or flight brain response.

Fear: It is an emotion induced by a perceived threat which causes you to quickly pull far away from it and usually hide.

Surprise: The result of an unexpected result causes a startle response.

Sadness: It is characterized by feelings of loss and it is a way showing others you need help.

Disgust: It is a basic emotion that functions to help protect an organism from ingesting potentially harmful substances, thereby promoting disease avoidance

Pleasure: It describes the broad class of mental states that humans and other animals experience as positive, enjoyable, or worth seeking.

Emotions are all processed the same way:

- ✓ You receive an emotional stimulus (you see a snake, something lurks in the bushes,...)
- ✓ Our brain processes the information, the result of which will be an emotion.
- ✓ Our brain orders our body to react (fight or flight brain response).

Each one of us reacts differently according to the way we feel. But the question is: are we happy with the way we react to each situation? What thoughts run through your head in each of those situations?

If your emotional state is due to a real situation (let's say you have just won the lottery or lost someone you love), what you feel is related to a situation that no-one else can change.

However, if your emotional state is triggered by an unreal situation, you'll have to figure out if it was provoked by you or someone else and recall what thoughts ran through your head in that moment.

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B. *SELF-AWARENESS* – recognise personal qualities and external supports.

1. Identify one's likes and dislikes, needs and wants, strengths and challenges, as also family, peer, school and community strengths.
2. Describe personal skills and interests that one wants to develop, explaining how family members, peers, school personnel and community members can support school success and responsible behaviour.
3. Analyse how personal qualities influence choices and successes and analyse how making use of school and community supports and opportunities can contribute to school, work and life success.
4. Set priorities in building on strengths and identifying areas for improvement, analysing how positive adult role models and support systems contribute to school, work and life success.
5. Implement a plan to build on a strength, meet a need or address a challenge, evaluating how developing interests and filling useful roles support school and life success.

We sometimes think that creativity and innovation are tasks for only a few, but that is not actually true. We can all be creative and come up with an innovative solution.

If you want to work creatively, don't forget that even if you come up with many ideas, you will be unconsciously driven to choose your first one.

How about we play a game which involves creativity: Think of something you can sit on... What comes to your mind? A chair, maybe...

Our answer is useful if we need to be quick, but it's not such a good answer if we are meant to be creative.

Grab a piece of paper and carry on thinking of different solutions. I'm sure you are aware of the moment you have begun to jot down creative ideas. Quantity is the key. Creativity is all about piling up ideas. You'll select the ones that you will keep later on.

Another important factor is how much you know about the matter that you are working on. The more you know the better. Little research is needed to understand what a chair is, but not the same can be said about different topics. Research is important before coming up with alternatives.

The last element you have to keep an eye on: is your attitude towards the situation you are facing. If you have to think about creative ideas of a topic about which you couldn't care less ...I'm sure your ideas won't be so good. Listen to yourself and be faithful to your emotional state. You may very well be undermining the task you have been assigned.

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C. *PROBLEM SOLVING* – demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.

1. Describe why school is important in helping students achieve personal goals and identify goals for academic success and classroom behaviours.
2. Describe the steps in setting and working toward goal achieving, monitoring progress on achieving a short-term personal goal.
3. Set a short-term goal and make a plan for achieving it, analysing at the end why one achieved it or not.
4. Identify strategies to make use of resources and overcome obstacles to achieve goals and apply them.
5. Set a post-secondary goal with action steps, timeframes and criteria for evaluating achievements, monitor progress toward achieving a goal and evaluate one's performance against criteria.

There are many ways that can help you solve problems. The internet is full of suggestions. Here is a suggested set of 5 steps:

Step 1: Point out what the problem is exactly, so that you can think of the right solution.

Step 2: Gather as much information as you can. The more information you gather the more alternatives you will come up with.

Step 3: Once you have gathered all the information, try to come up with as many alternatives as you can. The more the merrier. If you have the chance to work on the alternatives in a team, all the better.

Step 4: Time to keep your feet on the ground. Choose the alternative that best meets your objective. Don't forget about important factors, such as timing, plausibility...

Step 5: This is the most important step because it's when the learning process begins. We learn by assessing our achievement. Have we achieved what we had set in the first place? What turned out right? What can be improved?

Self-awareness is really important throughout this whole process. Face your problem as a challenge instead of a nuisance and you will be able to overcome it with these 5 steps.

Whether you face your problem with a positive or negative attitude is totally up to you. You choose.