

MAKING SPACE 365 CREATIVE SKILLS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP YOUTH TRAINING TOOLKIT

Maximising the Potential of Young
People through Creative and
Cultural Entrepreneurship in the
Community



Creative Competencies
Module T7
**Imagination and
cognitive flexibility**



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365



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Module T7: Imagination and Cognitive Flexibility

In this module, you will find a compendium of modular, active learning resources and activities that will support you and your learners to develop competencies on *Imagination and Cognitive Flexibility*.

Namely, this module contains:

- Description of a 3-hour face-to-face learning activity,
- Activities for a 2-hour self-directed learning,
- A fact sheet,
- Learner handouts (annex), and
- A set of self-reflection exercises (annex)

Aim and learning objectives of this module

The main aim of this module is to build basic cultural entrepreneurial skills and creative competencies, by providing a set of tools that support the development of competencies on *imagination and cognitive flexibility*.

Through this module, the learners are expected to develop the following knowledge, skills, and attitudes:

TOPIC	Knowledge	Skills	Attitude
T7 Imagination and cognitive flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T7K1 - Basic understanding of the concepts imagination and cognitive flexibility and their different aspects • T7K2 - Understand the link between imagination and creative thinking • T7K3 - Knowledge of tools and methods that help boost creativity and enhance cognitive flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T7S1 - Ability to use imagination and cognitive flexibility to overcome obstacles and solve problems • T7S2 - Ability to “think out of the box” and see different possibilities and potentials • T7S3 - Ability to use elements of different ideas to develop new innovative ideas • T7S4 - Ability to develop a vision • T7S5 - Empathy • T7S6 - Ability to facilitate the imagination and creativity processes of others • T7S7 - Ability to be flexible and adapt in different situations and changing environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T7A1 - Awareness that imagination is crucial to innovation • T7A2 - Openness to imagining new ideas/different outcomes for the future • T7A3 - Being flexible • T7A4 - Being adaptable • T7A5 - Awareness of the importance of cognitive flexibility for the successful implementation of an idea/activity.

Part 01: Imagination and cognitive flexibility f2f learning activity

In this part of the module, you will find a comprehensive learning activity that is designed for face-to-face group trainings. The duration of this learning activity is 3 hours. The aim of this activity is to support the trainers/facilitators in providing a holistic learning experience to groups of learners that will support them to develop their imagination and cognitive flexibility competence.

The activity uses different tools that can be used with different target groups and adapted to fit the needs of each group of learners.

Summary

Name of tool/ estimated time	Type of tool	objective of the tool
Part 01		
1	Introduction and “the nine-dot” puzzle 20'	Introduction / individual work
2	“Egg drop” 40'	Team-building
3	“Our story” 30'	Teamwork/story telling
Break 20' minutes		
Part 02		
4	“Our story” challenges... 70'	Teamwork/story telling
5	“Debriefing” 20'	Plenary discussion

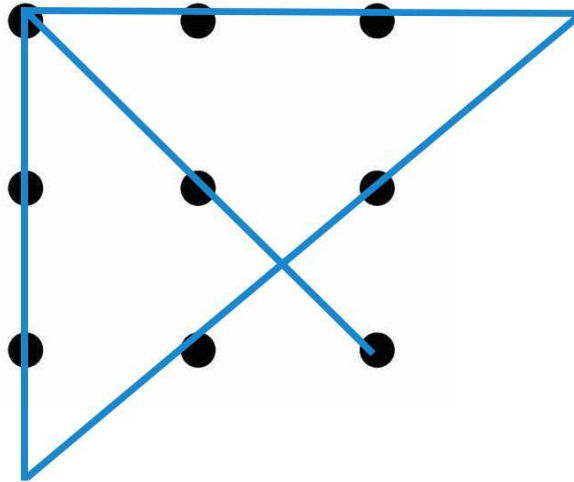
Detailed Description:

Part 01	
TITLE OF THE SESSION	Introduction to Imagination and Cognitive Flexibility
Approximate length	1 hour and 30 minutes
Group size	up to 30 participants
Equipment, materials & space needed	<p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A4 paper • Pens • Coloured markers • Big space • Tables (at least as many as the groups formed) and chairs <p>For the nine-dot puzzle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout of the nine-dot puzzle <p>For the “egg drop” activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper drinking straws or small wooden sticks – at least 7 per group • A4 papers • Some pieces of fabric • Paper tape or duct tape • Raw eggs – 2 per team (they are supposed to only use 1, but have the extras in case the egg breaks during the construction phase) • A high point from which to drop the egg (ideally something that leads to a place that can be easily cleaned afterwards) • Large enough clear floor or table space, for the team to work on <p>For the “our story” activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts -different for each team- you will find them towards the end of this document • Alternatively: Dixit cards
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To introduce the topic, energize the participants and get them to think “out of the box.” ❖ To stimulate participants to use their imagination and cognitive flexibility skills and work as a team. ❖ To give participants an opportunity to use their imagination and creativity in order to create something together.
Knowledge Skills Attitudes Reference	T8K1, T8S1-S3, T8A2-A3
Detailed description	<p>This part of the activity is divided in 3 phases, using different tools:</p> <p>Phase 01: Introduction and the nine-dot problem</p> <p>Step 01: The facilitator introduces the subject to the participants saying something along the lines of...</p> <p><i>“Welcome everyone. Today we are going to explore the theme of imagination and cognitive flexibility. Two skills that constitute components of creative thinking and the development of which is essential for anyone that wishes to create their own entrepreneurial endeavour, especially in the cultural and creative sectors. They are also</i></p>

skills that will support you in thinking creatively and finding ways to overcome any obstacles and challenges that you face. We will start this session with a small puzzle”.

Step 02: Give participants the handout with the nine dots problem and explain to them the rules. Give them a few minutes to work individually to solve the puzzle. DO NOT give them any more directions.

Step 03: After a few minutes, ask if anyone has solved it and see how they did it. The only way to solve the puzzle is to extend the lines outside the imaginary box created by the nine dots:



Step 04: Discuss with the participants if and why it was difficult to come up with a solution. Highlight the importance of being creative and thinking “out of the box” in order to find solutions to problems.

Phase 02: “Egg drop”

Step 01: Divide participants in teams of 4-6 people.

- **Step 02:** Give the materials to each team
- Paper drinking straws or small wooden sticks – at least 7 per group
- A4 papers – 1 per team
- Some pieces of fabric
- Paper tape or duct tape
- Raw eggs – 1 per team (but keep some extras, in case eggs break during the construction process)
- Do not give them too many materials

Step 03: Explain the rules: their challenge is to create a structure, using their imagination, teamwork and designing skills, that will prevent the egg from breaking if falling from a height of at least 3 metres. To make this construction, they can only use the materials provided to them. If during construction materials are destroyed (apart from the egg), they will not be replaced, so they must think carefully before using them.

In case there is more than one team, whose construction “saves” the egg, the winning team will be determined judging also the creativity of the design, as well as its visual appearance.

The teams have 20 minutes to complete their designs.

	<p>Step 04: After the 20 minutes, the facilitator gathers all the constructions and puts them to the test. Make sure you have a high (and safe) enough place, where to throw them from.</p> <p>Step 05: After the process finishes, debrief the participants. You can ask questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened during the design and construction phase? • How did they come up with their ideas? • Did the design changed in any way and why? • Did they identify alternative ways to execute their original design? • Did any problems occur and how did they solve them? • Where there and adversities and if so, how did they react? <p>The egg drop exercise is an excellent exercise to stimulate imagination and cognitive flexibility, given that there are infinite ways to complete it. It also introduces the participants to teamwork and collaboration.</p> <p>Phase 03: Our story</p> <p>Step 01: Divide participants to groups of 4-6 people (max. 5 teams) and give 1 handout with the “our story” task to each group (different one for each group).</p> <p>Step 02: The participants of each group need to work together and write a fictional story, using the photos on the handout as inspiration. All stories need to have at least one central character and as many minor ones as they like.</p> <p>Give them 20-30 minutes to complete the exercise.</p> <p>The exercise will continue after the break.</p> <p>Variation: If available, instead of the handout you can use DIXIT cards. Ask each team to pick 2 cards and draw inspiration from them.</p>
<p>Tips, recommendations for the facilitator</p>	<p>It is very important during all activities for the trainer/facilitator to be present and monitor the participants, as well as remind them of time left. However, he/she needs to allow participants to use their own creativity and imagination and not intervene with ideas, even when asked to.</p>
<p>BREAK</p>	
<p>Part 02</p>	
<p>TITLE OF THE SESSION</p>	<p>Cognitive flexibility in practice!</p>
<p>Approximate length</p>	<p>1 hour and 30 minutes</p>
<p>Group size</p>	<p>up to 30 participants</p>
<p>Equipment, materials & space needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart paper • A4 paper • Pens • Coloured markers • Big space • Tables (at least as many as the groups formed) and chairs

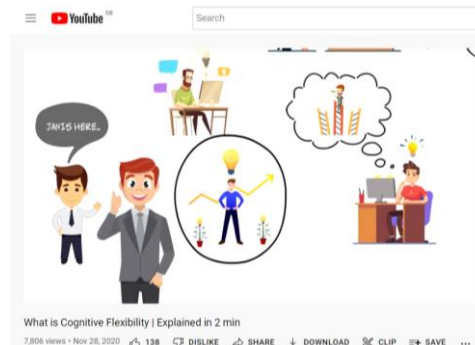
<p>Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To allow participants to use cognitive flexibility in order to find different solutions to given challenges. ❖ To debrief the activity, give space for comments and questions and consolidate what participants have learnt during this activity.
<p>Detailed description</p>	<p>Step 01: Each group presents/reads the story that they created to the other participants (3-5 minutes/team, maximum 20-30 mins in total)</p> <p>Step 02: Each group gives their story to the next group (ie. team 1 to team 2 and so on... The last group gives their story to group 1).</p> <p>Step 03: The groups carefully read the stories they were given and come up with one difficult obstacle that the central character encounters in the story and write it down on one paper. They have 10 minutes to complete this task.</p> <p>Step 04: The groups give back the stories to their original owners, together with the paper with the challenge. Each group needs to come up with as many ways for the character to overcome the obstacle as possible (at least 3). Give them 20 minutes to complete this task and put their results on a flipchart paper.</p> <p>Step 05: Give the floor to each group to present their solutions and allow room for questions and comments.</p> <p>DEBRIEFING!!!</p> <p>One of the most important parts of every activity is the debriefing. Make sure that you allow enough time for that and that all participants feel comfortable to participate.</p> <p>You can ask participants questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How did you feel during this activity? ❖ How easy was it for you to use your imagination to complete the tasks? ❖ How easy was it to come up with different solutions to the obstacle that the “hero” of your story had to face? ❖ What were the challenges/difficulties in doing this activity? ❖ How did you find solutions? ❖ What did you or the other participants do that was helpful to the process? ❖ If you took one thing out of this activity, what would that be?
<p>Tips, recommendations for the facilitator</p>	<p>Give clear instructions. Be present and ready to support the participants, if they need it, but also give them space to self-reflect and discuss among themselves.</p>

Part 02: Imagination and cognitive flexibility – activities for self-directed learning

In this part of the module, you will find a set of activities for self-directed learning that will support the learners/users to consolidate their knowledge on self-awareness and efficacy and on methods and tools that can support them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, as well as develop skills and attitudes related to the self-awareness and self-efficacy competence (as described in detail above).

Activity 01: Videos and questions

Watch these videos



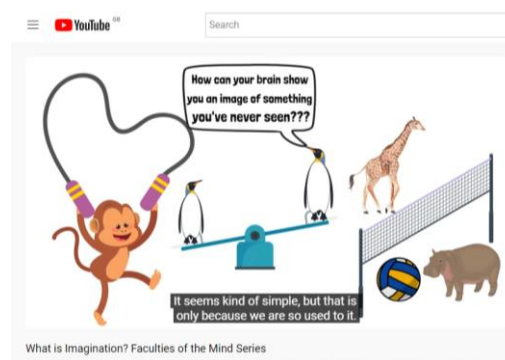
What is cognitive flexibility -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9nV_4ckULq&ab_channel=TimeManagementandProductivity



How Cognitive Flexibility Saved My Life -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOcmNw8G7Is&ab_channel=TEDxTalks



What is imagination -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNvhMFaGNQ&ab_channel=OntheMind

- Question 01: What is imagination and cognitive flexibility? How do they relate?
- Question 02: Why is imagination and cognitive flexibility important?
- Question 03: How can developing your imagination and cognitive flexibility skills also enhance your creative thinking skills and, ultimately, support you in creating your own successful entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sectors

Activity 02: Discovering Different ways

Cognitive Flexibility is all about having the ability to adjust your thinking to different situations and environments and think in a flexible way. Developing your cognitive flexibility is important, as it allows you to focus on different tasks at the same time, as well as effectively deal with ambiguity and change.

To check your cognitive flexibility, try the following exercise:

Your usual way of going to work/school is blocked because of works on the road. Try to think and write down ALL the possible alternative ways that you can use to get to your work/school.



When you finish, answer the following questions:

- Question 01: How many alternative ways did you find? Did they involve different roads, as well as different means of transportation?
- Question 02: How difficult was it for you to come up with these alternative routes?
- Question 03: Now that you have answered these questions, if you had to do it all over again, would you do it differently? Would you add anything?

Module T7: Imagination and Cognitive Flexibility

Imagination and Cognitive Flexibility

Fact Sheet



What is imagination?

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, imagination is:

1: the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality

2a: **creative ability**

b: **ability to confront and deal with a problem:**
RESOURCEFULNESS

c: **the thinking or active mind:** INTEREST

3a: **a creation of the mind**

b: **fanciful or empty assumption**

source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/imagination>

What is cognitive flexibility?

To understand the concept of cognitive flexibility all one needs to do is understand its components, namely:

Cognitive:

Stemming from “cognition” which is the “**mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses**”,

and **flexibility:**

1. The quality of bending easily without breaking.

1.1 The ability to be easily modified.

1.2 Willingness to change or compromise.

source: <https://www.lexico.com>

Having this in mind, **cognitive flexibility** refers to the ability of a person to **adjust their thinking** and adapt it according to the stimuli they get from their environment, the **ability to change their way of thinking**, as well as the ability to **think about different things** at the same time.



Why are they important?

The development of imagination and cognitive flexibility skills is extremely important, as they are essential to:

- Creative thinking
- Learning to learn
- Decision making
- Dealing with ambiguity and change
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Problem solving.... and many many more!

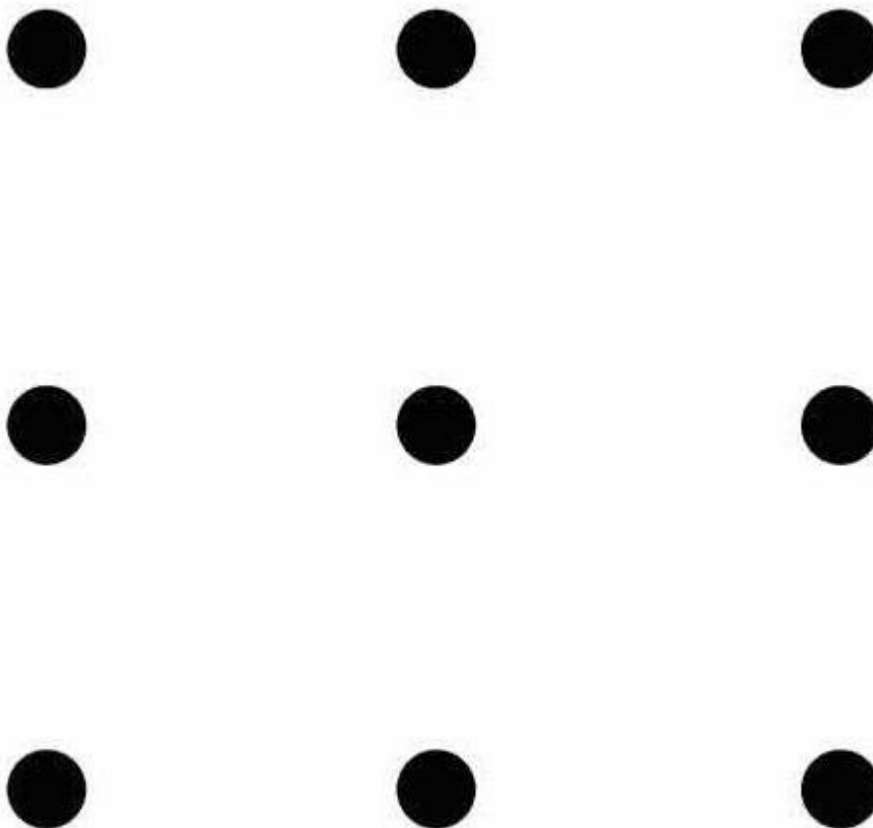
The nine-dots puzzle

Task: Connect ALL nine dots by making four lines that connect to each other, WITHOUT ever removing your pencil from the paper, and with each dot only have ONE line passing through it.

Going backwards with your pen is also not allowed.

You have 10 minutes to complete the task!

Good luck :-D



Our story

Group 1

TASK: Create a story AS A GROUP, using as inspiration the following images

Rules:

- The story needs to have a beginning and an end
- The story needs to have at least one main character
- All members of the group need to contribute to the creation of the story
- Use your imagination! Remember that there is no right or wrong... not possible or impossible... our imagination is the limit!



Our story

Group 2

TASK: Create a story AS A GROUP, using as inspiration the following images

Rules:

- The story needs to have a beginning and an end
- The story needs to have at least one main character
- All members of the group need to contribute to the creation of the story
- Use your imagination! Remember that there is no right or wrong... no possible or impossible... our imagination is the limit!



Our story

Group 3

TASK: Create a story AS A GROUP, using as inspiration the following images

Rules:

- The story needs to have a beginning and an end
- The story needs to have at least one main character
- All members of the group need to contribute to the creation of the story
- Use your imagination! Remember that there is no right or wrong... no possible or impossible... our imagination is the limit!



Our story

Group 4

TASK: Create a story AS A GROUP, using as inspiration the following images

Rules:

- *The story needs to have a beginning and an end*
- *The story needs to have at least one main character*
- *All members of the group need to contribute to the creation of the story*
- *Use your imagination! Remember that there is no right or wrong... no possible or impossible... our imagination is the limit!*



Our story

Group 5

TASK: Create a story AS A GROUP, using as inspiration the following images

Rules:

- The story needs to have a beginning and an end
- The story needs to have at least one main character
- All members of the group need to contribute to the creation of the story
- Use your imagination! Remember that there is no right or wrong... no possible or impossible... our imagination is the limit!



Self-Reflection Exercises Module T7: Imagination and Cognitive Flexibility

Work on imagination and cognitive flexibility

Exercise 01: Different uses

Part 01: Make a list of items in your house that you use more often.

Part 02: Try to think of different ways how you can use these items



Exercise 02: Make changes in your life

Imagination and cognitive flexibility is all about being able to accept changes and develop new ideas. Try practising this in your everyday life by:

- Changing your routine and finding different ways to do the things you usually do
- Try a new hobby or learning something new
- Do not be afraid to discover new experiences
- Meet new people
- Try to find alternative solutions for the things that you need to resolve
- Try to see the different perspectives of things (for example, speak with people with opinions and backgrounds different than yours)

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