

YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 29

Creative thinking is not just about using the right side of the brain. Use the whole brain in a fluent way.

Think fluently to innovate ...

"I've looked at clouds from both sides now" Joni Mitchell ~ Lyrics from "Both Sides Now"



"Cloud mapping Exmoor"

Do you think fluently?

Driving to Pevensey in Sussex, (close to where the Normans invaded England), I played over in my mind thoughts about a course design.

Arriving on a cold but sunny Pevensey beach I found myself pointing at the blue sky, using the fluffy cumulus clouds as virtual "Post It" notes to construct my course.

With startling clarity I "saw" the course, murmuring "Creative Solution Finding there, creative styles there, Solution Focus at that end..."

Onlookers would have seen a lunatic waving his arms at the sky but my children provided the perfect excuse for lunacy.

And my impromptu "cloud mapping" worked well, allowing me to dictate the course outline on to my tape recorder. A silver lining indeed.

I am not suggesting "cloud mapping" as a new technique (though wouldn't you love to have "Post It" clouds to move on the beach) but you could give it a try (in a very isolated spot).

On the drive home, my impromptu use of clouds prompted me to think about what constitutes a "creative" technique. Logically it is one that nurtures creative thinking.

Books on creativity contain scores of creative techniques, including mapping. Some help analyse or structure our thinking on a situation. Some prioritise ideas. Others help us to plan implementation. Is that creative thinking?

You could argue it is, because "creativity and innovation" is a complete process (from finding a challenge through to implementing solutions).

There is merit in that argument, but intuitively I think there is a difference between creative thinking, analytical thinking and structured thinking.

SO

So, I thought, why not invent a term that encompasses all the different types of thinking a creative leader does?

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A worthwhile thought, the problem was that I couldn't find an appropriate term!

However, after a few months of musing, I have arrived at the term, "Fluent Thinking".

Yes, if you look up "fluent" in your dictionary it means "to speak or write with ease", but why shouldn't we extend that to thinking as well? After all, if you think fluently, you are likely to speak and write fluently too.

In my mind, "Fluent Thinking" encompasses the use of creative, analytical and structuring techniques a creative leader uses.

Ask me to write a definition for the Oxford English Dictionary and it would be:

"Thinking that helps you take a more creative, innovative, broad and flexible approach to a given situation."

What would be your definition?

ACTION

Think about the term "Fluent Thinking" and constructively criticise it. Generate your own ideas about what "creative thinking is". Could you accept the term "fluent thinking" or does it fall down somewhere?

TO CLOSE

If we are to encompass "Creative Thinking" within "Fluent Thinking" perhaps we should call a Creative Leader a Fluent Leader? And call one who has a glass of beer or wine too many, a "Fluid Leader"? Hmm. Maybe THAT falls down somewhere. May all your clouds have a silver lining.

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