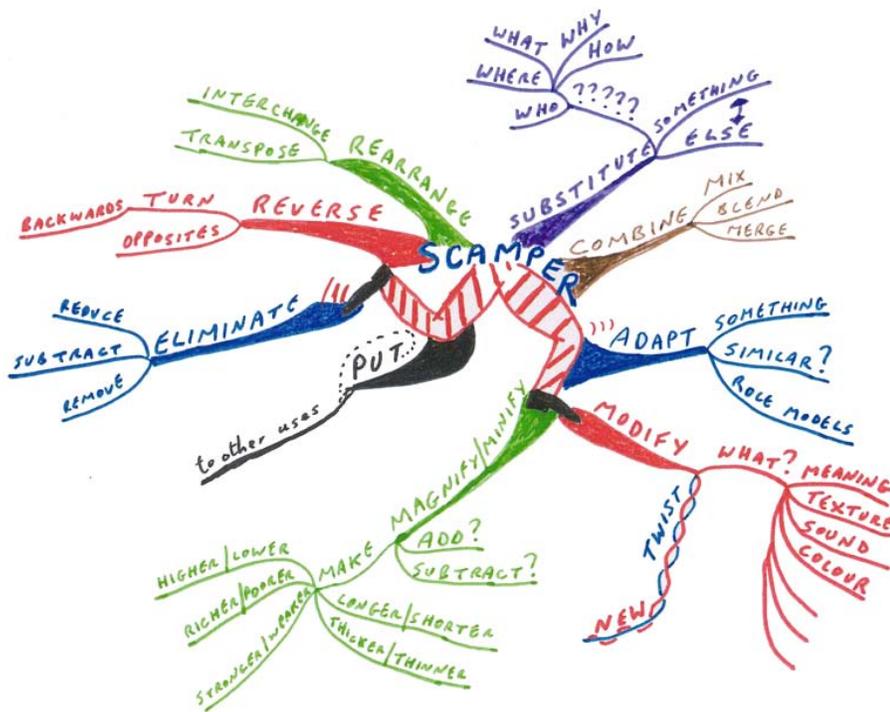


1ST MAKER SPACE CREATIVITY TRAINING 1:4



Mind Map of SCAMPER
Illumine Ltd. www.MindMap.co.uk

Using SCAMPER A powerful tool for Creative Thinking

By Arlon Bayliss Artist, Designer, Educator and Creativity Consultant at 1st Maker Space: www.1stmakerspace.com

As our 1st Maker Space Summer Camps get off to a flying start, our staff are excited to focus on transforming the lives of youth through our workshops and curricula. At the heart of that transformation is the development of critical and creative thinking. In this article I'll describe a powerful thinking tool students will be introduced to and encouraged to use. It's enormously helpful when it comes to finding new solutions and refining ideas. Give it a try yourself and see how it works!

Alex Osborn, an advertising executive in the 1960's is credited by many as the originator of brainstorming. He developed many of the questions used in this creativity training technique. In the 70's Bob Eberle, an education administrator and author, organized some of Osborn's questions into the SCAMPER mnemonic.

- S**ubstitute
- C**ombine
- A**dapt
- M**odify
- P**ut to another use
- E**liminate
- R**everse

By using each of the seven actions as prompts, we can ask thought-provoking questions about products or ideas, existing or imagined. These questions will stimulate creative ideas for developing new solutions or products, or for improving current ones. Here's how it works:

- Begin with defining an idea or object. This could be one that you are imagining, one you want to improve, one that you're currently having problems with, or one that you think could be a good starting point for future development.
- Ask questions about it, using the SCAMPER mnemonic tool to guide you.
- Consider doing this in a group setting. Generally small groups of 5-7, or smaller breakout groups work well. Record your results.
- Look at the answers you come up with. Do any stand out as viable solutions? Could you use any of them to refine an existing product, or develop a new one? If any of your ideas seem viable, plan to explore them further. Be prepared to repeat this process as you build on good work.

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Example Questions

Here are some starter questions we could ask for each letter of the mnemonic. It's important that you invent and add your own questions because they will be specifically focussed on your particular situation:

Remember - some ideas you generate using this tool may be impractical, or may not suit your circumstances. Don't worry, the aim is to generate as many ideas as you can, and keep your ideas flowing, *There are no bad ideas!*

Substitute

What materials or resources can you substitute or swap to improve the product?
 What other product or process could you use?
 What rules could you substitute?
 Can you use this product somewhere else, or as a substitute for something else?
 What will happen if you change your feelings or attitude toward this product?

Combine

What would happen if you combined this product with another to create something new?
 What if you combined purposes or objectives?
 What could you combine to maximize the usefulness of this product?
 Could you combine talent or resources to create a new approach or use for this product?

Adapt

How could you adapt or readjust this product to serve another purpose?
 What else is the product like?
 Who or what could you emulate to adapt this product?
 What else is like your product?
 What other context could you put your product into?
 What other products or ideas could you use for inspiration?

Modify

How could you change the shape, look, or feel of your product?
 What could you add to modify this product?
 What could you emphasize or highlight to create more value?
 What elements of this product could you strengthen to create something better or new?

Put to Another Use

Can you use this product somewhere else?
 Or for something else?
 Who else could use this product?
 How would this product behave differently in another setting?
 Could you recycle the waste from this product to make something new?

Eliminate

How could you streamline or simplify this product?
 What features, parts, or rules could you eliminate?
 What could you understate or tone down?
 Could you make parts smaller, faster, lighter, or more fun?
 What would happen if you took away part of this product? -what would you have in its place?
 Could eliminating parts strengthen your idea?

Reverse

What would happen if you reversed a process or sequenced things differently?
 What if you try to do the exact opposite of what you are doing now?
 What components could you switch to change order within this product?
 What roles could you reverse or swap?
 How could you reorganize this product?

Record what you come up with. Later, when you have everything recorded, reflect and refine your ideas. Be ready to repeat this process. That will help you create further improvements and even better work!

For comments or more information, feel free to contact the author:

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