

# *CS 321 Human-Computer Interaction*

## **Some terms and concepts: Creativity**

**Notes from: “A Whack on the Side of the Head: How you can be more creative”, R. von Oech, U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 1990**

**Creative Thinking** is looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different.

- Shifting the context in which you think about something
- Requires an attitude that allows you to search for ideas and manipulate your knowledge and experience

**Mental Locks** are attitudes that lock our thinking into the status quo and keep us thinking “more of the same”.

1. **Habitual Thinking** – Doing things or thinking about things in way that is out of habit. Habit reduces cognitive load but can keep your thinking in a rut.
2. **The Right Answer** – Thinking that there must be only one right answer or the best answer. By being stuck looking for “the right answer” we tend to discard potentially good solutions before we have a chance to explore them. Formal education teaches us the “right answer” way of thinking.
3. **Logical or Mathematical Thinking** – Logical thinking emphasizes that everything must be explained and there can be no contradictions. You must make assumptions that remove any ambiguity. Formal education tends to emphasize this way of thinking. In design, particularly early creative design, it is o.k to have unanswered questions; the point is to explore ideas. These ideas may later lead to potential practical solution.
4. **Follow the Rules** – Thinking that rules must be followed. Society emphasizes this type of thinking. To see new possibilities you must sometime break the rules, and then explore how breaking those rules could lead to potential solutions.
5. **Play is Frivolous** – Business thinking leads us to believe that the bottom-line is about productivity, so any activity that is not directly productive must be unproductive. Sometimes it helps to look at ideas in playful, humorous, or imaginative ways. These can possibly lead to new insights that can potentially be productive down the line.

6. I'm Not Creative – Self-fulfilling prophecy. Give yourself a license to be creative.