

SCAMPER

A tool for teaching divergent and creative thinking

There are many questions that can help students to "think laterally" or "get out of the box." This ability to extend beyond the obvious and the time-worn is an essential ingredient in effective problem-solving because it helps to generate the unusual and imaginative solutions we associate with the skill of synthesis, the rearranging, modifying and combining of elements in novel ways to achieve desired and often startling results.

SCAMPER is one set of questioning strategies that works well. Students can be taught to ask how to change an existing product, item or idea by asking how to Substitute, Combine, Add, (Modify, Magnify, Minify), Put to other uses, Eliminate, and Reverse (Eberle, 1972).

SCAMPER tools are used on answers that we already have to questions, when we need a detour in our thinking to see something in a new way. It requires the suspension of judgment and a playful attitude. Many of the ideas will not lead anywhere, but they may add up to be more than the sum of their parts.

One of the benefits of using the SCAMPER tools with students asking the questions is that they both ask and answer the questions. The questions, though often very divergent, require a thorough going knowledge of the required content.

Quoted from Jamie McKenzie at <http://www.fno.org/toolbox2.html#Divergent>

SCAMPER

S = substitute

C = combine

A = add

M = modify, magnify or minify

P = put to other uses

E = eliminate

R = reverse