***Creative Thinking***

**Definition**

Creative thinking is “the capacity to generate many different kinds of ideas, manipulate ideas in unusual ways and make unconventional connections in order to outline novel possibilities that have the potential to elegantly meet a given purpose.” ([Australian Council for Educational Research](https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=ar_misc), 2020) Involving generation (innovation), experimentation (risk-taking and play), and understanding of conventional domains in order to alter them, creative thinking empowers students to think, react, and work in original ways. “The creative thinker, at the highest levels of performance, pushes beyond those boundaries in new, unique, or atypical recombinations, uncovering or critically perceiving new syntheses and using or recognizing creative risk-taking to achieve a solution.” (AAC&U VALUE Rubric for Creative Thinking) These solutions could involve either process, product, or both, and in a curricular context, can manifest as creative practice or original creative work (for example, original written, musical, or artistic expressions).

**Rationale and Intent**

Fitchburg State University is committed to supporting and promoting our undergraduates as creative thinkers. Higher education is uniquely positioned to address what has come to be recognized as a widespread social deficit: “Significant declines in … fluid and original thinking … indicate that Americans generate not only fewer ideas or solutions to open-ended questions or challenges, but also fewer unusual or unique ideas than those in preceding decades.” (2017 follow-up report to K.H. Kim’s *The Creativity Crisis*, 2011). Recent studies have affirmed the centrality of creativity and innovative thinking in all aspects of personal, academic and civic life (John Howkins, *The Creative Economy,* 2001). Developing the creative potential of our students is crucial to building a competitive future, both individually and collectively, and innovation is a thread that runs through the University’s Mission and Vision.

In the LA&S curriculum, certain skills have been prioritized, so that students have the opportunity to further develop them throughout their general education course of study. Courses designated as Critical and Creative Thinking across the Disciplines (CCTAD) courses must address at least one of these goals as a secondary skill. Creative thinking is one such goal, which can be designated as a secondary skill in a CCTAD course.

**Goal** (approved as a definition for creative thinking in AUC60, 2019)

Fitchburg State students will combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways;

think, react, and work in imaginative ways; engage in innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

**Potential Course Objectives**

The objectives below are recommended as models for general education course syllabi. The list is not meant to be complete. Faculty should feel free to adopt these as course objectives, or they may develop their own.

* Generate original creative works
* Identify and evaluate the traditional parameters of an idea, and propose multiple varied, and original ways of transcending those forms
* Flexibly apply multiple perspectives to reimagine disciplinary or interdisciplinary products or processes