Visual Thinking for Art Librarians and Artists: Techniques for Unlocking Your Creativity to Generate Ideas and Solve Problems

**Techniques for Generating Ideas**

**Visual Brainstorming**
- **Technique:** Visualize an image of what you would like to solve, design, or invent. Then move the images around in your mind and let your mind make connections, generate ideas, and offer solutions. Albert Einstein attributed his idea of relativity to a visualization whereby he imagined himself riding a light ray (Samuels, 1990, p. 250).

**Lateral Thinking**
- **Technique:** The term lateral thinking was coined by Dr. Edward de Bono. It is a creative technique that begins with one idea that is explored and leads to many more ideas. Leonardo da Vinci’s notebooks of sketches and notes that examine an idea and generate many more relational ideas is a perfect example of lateral thinking (Kemp, 2006, p. 26).

**Do you dream of being more creative and effective in your role as an art librarian, image professional or artist?** “Visual thinking, the ability to create and interact with images in one’s mind” (Sanders, 1999, p. 87), offers techniques that can help you reach your goals.

Although visual thinking became popular in the 1960’s, it has fully developed and is now viewed as an important skill for innovation. Visual thinking can also be used by art librarians and artists to creatively generate and conceptualize ideas, solve problems and come up with new insights.

**Techniques for Insights and Solving Problems**

**Mental Rehearsal**
- **Technique:** Visualize a scenario or situation that you will soon face. Watch it play out on your mental screen. Imagine how you would like it to play out, while also remaining open to possible scenarios. Note feelings, potential roadblocks or info you need to be better prepared.
- **Applications:** Job interview, difficult talk, presentation.

**Perfect/Future Self**
- **Technique:** From visualizations to improve self-image (Percepta-Phenom, Moscow, 1969), to visualizations of meeting another version of yourself who is an expert in the subject needed (Karnaim, Quantum Jumping, 2013), these are visual thinking techniques for gaining insights, solving problems and becoming more aware of options and thoughts on a subject.

**Techniques to Increase Creativity**

**EEG Headset**
- **Technique:** EEG headsets by Muse, Versus, and Eopoc indicate brainwave activity and states. Users utilize the headsets to learn how to control stress, meditate better, enter an Alpha wave (7-13 Hz) state for focused productivity, and Theta wave (4-7 Hz) state for increased creativity.

**Visual Thinking Apps**
- **Technique:** Many new visual thinking apps are now available to assist you in your creative endeavors. Some iPad Apps include: Brainstorm, iDeasketch, Penultimate, Jot, Popple Lite, Inkflow, and Smartnote.

**Visual Journaling**
- **Technique:** Draw pictures and diagrams along with text to record information that is not communicated or remembered well with words alone. This should improve memory recall when read in the future.
- **Applications:** Recording dreams, lecture notes, ideas, quick sketches of art history slides, etc.

**Lucid Dreaming**
- **Technique:** Become conscious in the dreamstate. While in the dream find answers to creative problems, improve dream recall/memory, and more.
- **Book to learn the technique:** Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming by Dr. Stephen LaBerge.

**Techniques to Improve Memory**

**Active Imagination**
- **Technique:** Active imagination was developed by Psychologist Carl Gustav Jung. It involves passively looking at the imagery that wells up from the unconscious and entering into an active dialogue and fantasy with those aspects that are part of yourself (Jung, 2006, p. 227).
- **Application:** Personal indviduation

**Subconscious Recall**
- **Technique:** Subconscious memories are those below the conscious mind. To become conscious of or recall them, it is useful to think of what you want to remember, childhood home, a dream, etc. Then with the question in mind, quietly and passively remain in a state like a student who is waiting for the answer. Stay aware of and mentally follow the leads you receive.

**Works Cited**


