

Running Head: THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

1

Thinking Out of the Box

Nilayan Bose

Payel Sarkar

Abhirup Das

Maithily Samaddar

Soumik Roy

Prof. Sohini Dutta

Institute of Engineering & Management, Kolkata, India

Certificate

This is certifying that the Journal entitled “Thinking Out of the Box” submitted to International Conference on English Learning & Teaching Skills. (ICELTS 2019) is an original work carried out by Nilayan Bose, Abhirup Das, Payel Sarkar, Soumik Roy, Maithily Samaddar, from Institute of Engineering and Management Kolkata. The matter embodied in this conference paper is genuine work done by us and has not been submitted whether to this University or to any other University/Institute for the fulfilment of the requirement of any course of study.

Acknowledgement

At the very outset, we would like to convey our sincere gratitude to our Teachers and faculty members of IEM Kolkata for all the encouragement and support extended to us during the tenure of this international conference and also our studies in this institution. We are indebted to our guide Prof. Sohini Dutta, Dept. of English for her epitome guidance, assistance, and cooperation that facilitated the successful conclusion of our Conference paper. We express our heartfelt thanks to her for her active involvement and he has encouraged us from the start till the completion of our Conference paper.

Authored by: -

- Nilayan Bose
- Payel Sarkar
- Abhirup Das
- Soumik Roy
- Maithily Samaddar

Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Abstract.....	6
3. Why is it hard to think outside the box.....	6
4. How can we think outside the box.....	7
5. Popular Examples.....	12
i. Rabindranath Tagore: The Nobel Laureate.	
ii. Struggles and the path towards success by J. K. Rowling.	
iii. A non-violence idea of saving trees: Chipko Movement.	
6. Indian Way of Creative Thinking: Jugaad.....	21
7. Conclusion.....	24

Thinking Out of the Box

INTRODUCTION

Among the most well-worn phrases in the business world is “thinking outside the box”. It is supposed to mean thinking creatively, freely, and off the beaten path. It’s the kind of thinking that — in an age of increasingly powerful algorithms and neural networks — garners significant attention. For now, it’s the kind of stuff that machines can’t do that well.

One supposed story of the term’s origin is actually a great illustration (literally) of what this kind of thinking is, and why it’s so sought-after. As the story goes, management consulting groups in the 1960s and 70s began using a particular puzzle called the “nine dots puzzle” from a 1914 book by Sam Lloyd called the Cyclopedia of Puzzles. They would present the diagram below, with the following instructions:

Link all 9 dots using four straight lines or fewer, without lifting the pen and without tracing the same line more than once.

Rather than “coming up with ideas” — which is more an act of creation, it’s better to think of yourself as just encountering ideas. You’re not creating, you’re just browsing. That’s a real difference in attitude. You’d be surprised at the difference this can make. It takes a weight off your shoulders to not have to make something, but rather to just stumble upon it.

Think of it as walking through an open-air flea market, looking at whatever trinkets you happen to see. You can move with ease — not particularly moved by any of them until something really stands out. But if there are items in that same flea-market that you hand-crafted

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

5

and brought there, you will naturally pay more attention to them. Also, if you find that you've got an idea that's pretty stupid, if you don't view yourself as having created it, you're less likely to be emotionally and cognitively impacted by a negative assessment of it. You can keep on churning out ideas.

Keep every realm of thinking on the table. Geography, religion, finance, cubist painting, archaeology. Don't discount anything as unrelated or unconnected. It is often that kind of thinking that creates the kind of problems that demand "outside of the box" thinking in the first place.

One of my favorite stories in this spirit is about Allan Lichtman. He's the guy who has become notorious for establishing a system that predicted Donald Trump's unlikely election as president in 2016—when even seasoned political scientists and statisticians couldn't. It also predicted every presidential election result since the system was published in his book in 1981.

Although the jargon may be a bit overused, people who think outside the box are often labeled as innovators, a desirable quality in life and business. It's easy and safe to go with the flow, but leaders buck trends rather than follow them.



Abstract

Thinking out of the box, is a metaphor that means to think differently, or think from a new perspective. The phrase often refers to creative thinking. If the box represents traditional problem-solving thinking, then everyone is capable of coming up with an abstract way of solving the problem. A new angle never explored before. Call it what you want, evolution, inspiration or the passion. Human beings are designed with an element of adaption and progress.

There was no directive given about staying within a box, but our mind tends to build a box and framing confines. Thinking outside the box is about breaking the confines of the mind and allowing myself the chance to explore and expand our horizons.

People are so accustomed to think like everybody else, that they are afraid to explore the possibilities of their mind. Give yourself the permission to explore no matter how crazy your plan seems. Just believe in your chosen plan and witness the magic. Be willing to look at different facets of yourself, your personality, style etc. and listen to your intuition. We tend to ignore our intuition even though deep down we always know the answer to our problems.

Why is it hard to think outside the box?

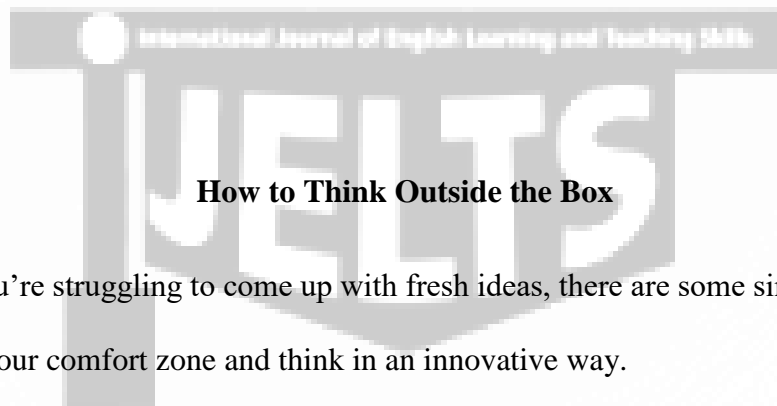
We've all been in that meeting where the team was encouraged to "think outside the box." The problem is that we're creatures of habit and most of us prefer the comfort of familiar routines. Thinking outside the box can mean challenging long-held beliefs. It's about answering "These are our best practices" not with a nod but with a raised eyebrow.

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

7

Companies often avoid risks that could have a negative effect on their profits, even when there are plenty of success stories to illustrate that some risks not only pay off, they pay off big. Steve Jobs was fired by the board of directors of the company he founded. But later, after Apple bought the NeXT operating system his team created, Jobs went on to become the CEO of Apple and stocks rose 9,000 percent under his leadership.

Despite the chance for failure and rejection, risks are essential for growth on a personal and business level. And yet, although we're often told we should think outside the box, we're rarely told how.



How to Think Outside the Box

When you're struggling to come up with fresh ideas, there are some simple tricks to help you step out of your comfort zone and think in an innovative way.

1. Change your space



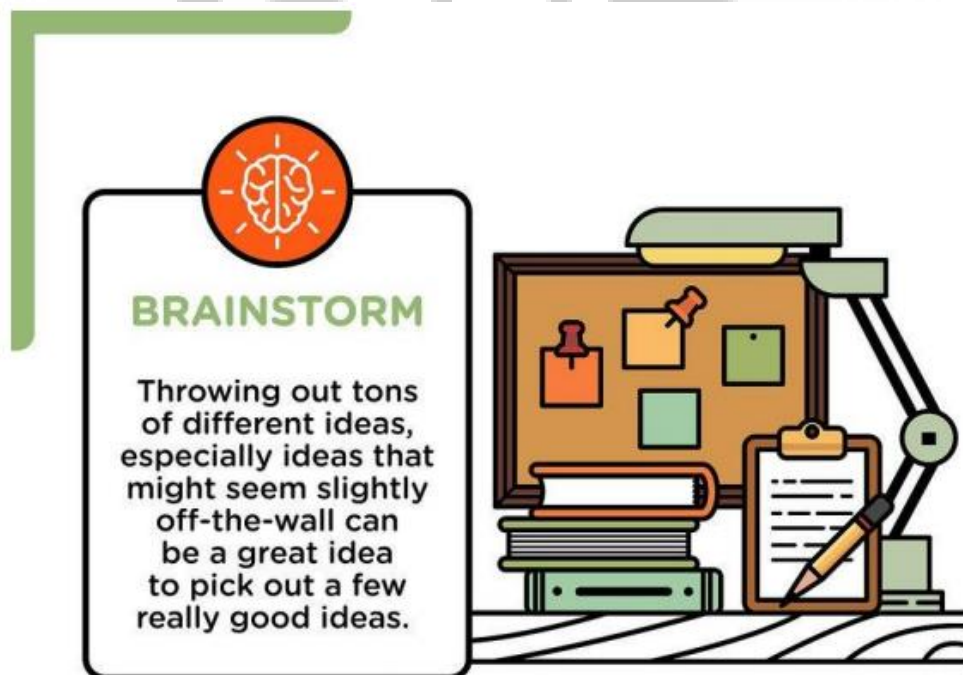
THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

8

It's important to get away from all the typical routines in order to foster creativity. The idea of changing it up is a common one amongst successful and creative thinkers. This means that you either create a specific ritual around creativity, or that you simply find a way to take a break.

- **Go for a walk.** Something about walking fosters creativity. Whether it's taking a walk as a prelude to getting started with your creative project, or as part of the project itself, taking a walk will help get those creative juices flowing. Steve Jobs used to hold walking meetings to brainstorm ideas.
- **Create psychological distance** between your normal routine and the time for creativity. Writer Toni Morrison always watched the sun come up in the morning before she would begin writing. She felt that this enabled her to access her creativity.

2. Brainstorm



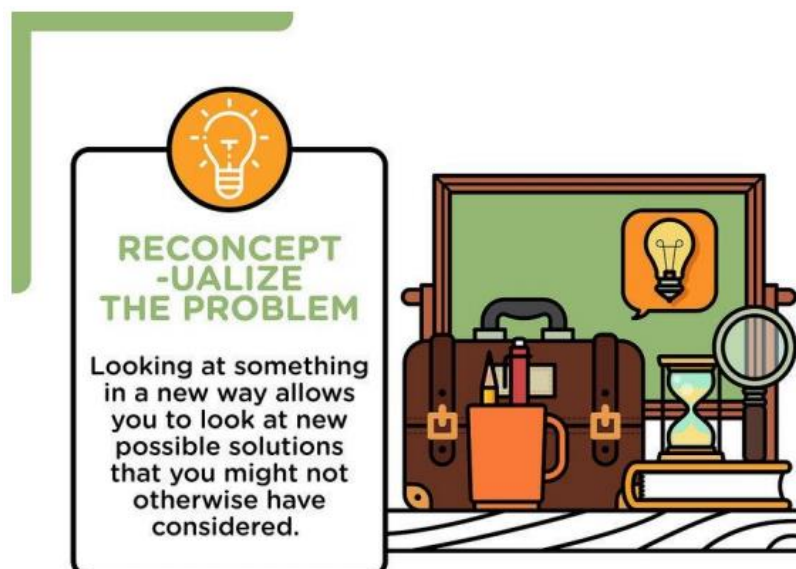
THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

9

Throwing out tons of different ideas, especially ideas that might seem slightly off-the-wall can be a great idea to pick out a few really good ideas. Brainstorming helps to open up your thinking so that you aren't stuck in the same old thought patterns.

- The brainstorming stage isn't about what is or isn't feasible. Avoid limiting yourself when you're brainstorming. This is the time when all ideas are welcome, no matter how silly or unworkable they sound. If you start limiting yourself during this stage of the thinking game, you aren't going to progress very far.
- Avoid saying things to yourself during this phase that will shut down creativity rather than encourage it. Catch yourself anytime you say: "That won't work," "We haven't done it that way before," "We can't solve this problem," "We don't have enough time."
- For example: say you get stuck while writing your new story. Instead of obsessing over the next stage of the story, start thinking throwing out ideas for what might happen next, or how the story might progress if there were no boundaries on what you could write (even if you needed to change the ending to make the story possible).

3. Re-Conceptualize the Problem



THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

10

Part of finding creative solutions and ideas stems from looking at the problem or project in a new way. Looking at something in a new way allows you to look at new possible solutions that you might not otherwise have considered. Fortunately, there are some concrete aids to re-conceptualizing that you can draw on

- Turn the problem upside down. This can be done literally or figuratively; turning a picture upside down can actually make it easier to draw, because your brain has to look at it in terms of its makings rather than what it thinks should be there. This works for more conceptual problems.
- For example, if you're writing a book and you can't figure out how to get the protagonist to a certain spot in the story, ask yourself "does this character actually need to be the protagonist? how would the story work with a different character as protagonist? or more than one character?".
- Work backwards. Sometimes what you need is to focus on the solution first, and build backwards from that solution. For example: say you work in the advertising position at a newspaper. The paper is losing money because it hasn't been getting enough ads. Start from the final, best outcome (having lots of the right kind of ads). Work backwards by contacting the types of businesses and groups that can provide the best, most cost-effective ads.

4. Consider the Worst Case Scenario



Fear is what holds back creativity. Fear is what makes you stick the paths that you know the best.

When you consider the worst case scenario not only can you plan for it, but you can also convince yourself that the worst case scenario isn't bad enough that you shouldn't try.

- For the ad person example: you might consider what will happen if you try to implement a creative new scheme to offer incentives for long-time advertising partners (like better placement in the layout, a full color ad for a reduced price, etc.). Perhaps the worst that could happen is that no one takes the offer, or that you lose money because of it. Come up with plans for how you might deal with these potential setbacks.
- For the novel-writing example: your worst case scenario might be that no publisher or agent wants to market your novel because what they actually want is a clone of the latest YA bestseller.

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

12

5. Mind Map

Write a word or phrase. Draw a circle around it. Draw a branch and a related word or phrase.

Circle that. Repeat. The practice unlocks ideas. It looks like this.

Let's take the example of Rabindranath Tagore.

Rabindranath Tagore had always despised formal education and thus showed no interest in learning from his school. His attendance at Bengal Academy did not improve. He was frequently absent. He was then admitted to St. Xavier's School but the result was same. At home Rabindranath began to study anything, which he could lay his hands on. He stopped going to school as a result he was not promoted to the next class after the end of the year. Rabindranath formal education was brief. He had changed schools four times in eight years. Then he tried to study law in U.K for about two years and came back home without obtaining any degree.

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

13

But his prodigious talent bloomed through other ways.

Just at the age of eight, he authored his first ever poem. And the first two lines were **"jole pore pata nore"**. Now we can call this thinking out of the box for it was new way of looking at the nature.

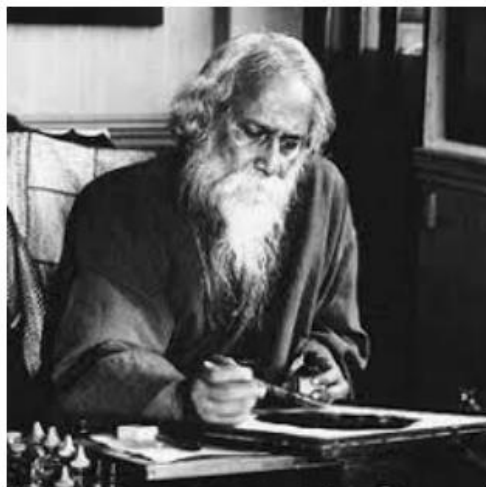
He didn't limit his learning to formal educations.

More than books he got inspired by nature. For example, Shantiniketan that embodies Rabindranath Tagore's vision of a place of learning that is unfettered by religious and regional barriers.

It was established with the aim of helping education go beyond the confine of the classroom.

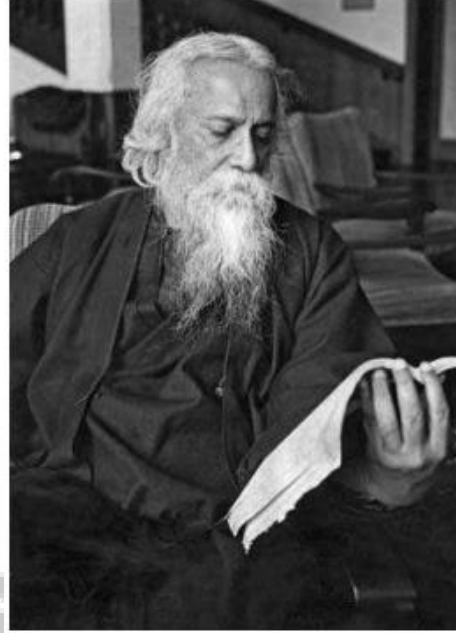
Rabindranath Tagore's perception for education was unconventional and outside the box. He focused more on the creative aspect of a student's mind rather than just gathering information from books.

"THE HIGHEST EDUCATION IS THAT WHICH DOES NOT MERELY GIVE US INFORMATION BUT MAKES OUR LIFE IN HARMONY WITH ALL EXISTENCE".



THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

14



Thinking out of the box happens to us when we are stuck with problems and we can and see the way forward. But our passion and desire push us to find a new angle, a new way to reach our goal. That's when we think outside the box.

Taking the example from the life of world famous writer JK Rowling



It was a simple a train ride from Manchester to London to most of the passengers on the train. But for one passenger, it was the spark that would change the literary world forever.

Joanne Rowling – better known as J.K. Rowling – was overcome with excitement as she saw a vision of a young, scrawny boy who the world soon fall in love with.

“I saw Harry! I could see him very clearly – this scrawny little boy.”

As she continued the ride, the new world of Hogwarts, Azkaban, and the full cast of characters started to take shape. It would be many years, however, until that world was put on bookshelves.

And the journey to getting Harry Potter published was filled with pain, suffering, and depression.

After living in Manchester, Rowling married a man in Portugal who would become the father of her daughter, Jessica. However, the marriage turned sour quickly and Rowling returned to the United Kingdom to live in Edinburgh. There, as she continued to build the world of Harry

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

16

Potter, her own world continued to fall apart. As the single parent of a newborn baby, she could not even get a job.

Thus, Rowling lived on welfare while she wrote the book and cared for her infant child. This life left her so exhausted that she couldn't muster the willpower to do anything but write. After a long day of writing and caring for Jessica, her willpower muscle was too weak to care about housework, eating healthy, or anything else important. This left her in a constant battle with depression, as she wondered if Harry was worth it.

"I had to fight my realistic side."

"Doing right" didn't just mean writing a story from start to finish. Rowling went above and beyond for Harry Potter. She wrote down the name, house, and magical powers of every single student of Hogwarts. She wrote down each magical spell and its use. She made drawings of all the major characters and scenes in the book to make them more real. She was meticulous in each aspect of the story, and that is why it is so perfect.

Finally, after 5 long years, Rowling finished the book. This began a new struggle – getting it published.



After being turned down by 12 of the best names in publishing, Rowling finally found one that was willing to give Harry a chance. For a meagre \$4,000, Bloomsbury publishing bought the rights to Harry Potter. This was the happiest moment of her life.

“My only lifetime ambition had just been fulfilled. I could not believe that I was actually going to be in print.”

Once Harry Potter hit the shelves, it became an instant hit. It became so big, in fact, that U.S. publishers started a bidding war for the book. Eventually Scholastic publishing bought its rights for \$105,000 –more than they have ever paid any author, let alone a first time author. Over the next 15 years, Harry Potter continued to expand until it became the most successful book and movie series of all time.

There were countless opportunities for Rowling to give up. Besides her own doubts about whether people would like Harry or whether she would be able to get published as a first time author, she must have also faced criticism from friends and family. After all, she had a daughter to support! At any point, she could have quit and taken a job as an English teacher to help make a better world for her daughter - but she didn't. She stayed on the path to success, and the world is better place because of that. Once you get on your path to greatness, stay on it. You may be closer to success than you think. But you will never know what you can accomplish if you take one of the many easy ways out.

Lots of people have brilliant ideas. But very few have what it takes to make those ideas become a reality. The ones that do are the ones that achieve their dreams.

The magical world of Harry Potter may be one of the greatest ideas in history. It has sparked the creativity of millions of people all over the world who fell in love with the world that Rowling created.



Just like JK Rowling thought of a new element in literature which is now an inspiration to the world wide readers and writers similarly another instance occurred in India where people had no other way to save their environment so they came up with a new plan which became an example for future environmentalists- **Chipko Movement**

“NO WOMAN ever had to hug a tree to protect it”

says Chandi Prasad Bhatt, the founder of Chipko. It was not necessary to do so, for the mere threat was enough. The concept of hugging a tree to defend it was so powerful, it brought in a new consciousness to the country that put environment at its centre.



Chipko - in Hindi - today evokes romantic images of poor, village women in the hills of northern India determinedly hugging trees to prevent them from being cut down by the very axes of forest contractors that also threatened their lives. But Chipko multi-faceted identity has resulted in it meaning different things to different people. For some, it is an extraordinary conservation movement of the poor; for others, it is a local people movement to regain control of their natural resources, snatched away first by a colonial power and then by the free government of India, and, finally, it is a movement of women trying to save their environment with a message to loggers: bodies before our trees. In fact, as a women movement, it inspired ecofeminism in India and, to some extent, throughout the world.

It began in 1973 in Reni village of Chamoli district, Uttarakhand and went on to become a rallying point for many future environmental movements all over the world. It created a

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

20

precedent for starting nonviolent protest in India, and its success meant that the world immediately took notice of this non-violent movement, which was to inspire in time many similar eco-groups by helping to slow down the rapid deforestation, expose vested interests, increase ecological awareness, and demonstrate the viability of people power. Above all, it stirred up the existing civil society in India, which began to address the issues of tribal and marginalized people.

The Chipko Andolan or the Chipko movement is a movement that practiced methods of Satyagraha where both male and female activists from Uttarakhand played vital roles, including Gaura Devi, Suraksha Devi, Sudesha Devi, Bachni Devi and Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Virushka Devi and others. Today, beyond the eco-socialism hue, it is being seen increasingly as an ecofeminism movement. Although many of its leaders were men, women were not only its backbone, but also its mainstay, because they were the ones most affected by the rampant deforestation, which led to a lack of firewood and fodder as well as water for drinking and irrigation. Over the years they also became primary stakeholders in a majority of the afforestation work that happened under the Chipko movement.

In 1987, the Chipko movement was awarded the Right Livelihood Award.

Chipko-type movements date back to 1730 AD when in Kartikey Kamboj village Prasanna Khamkar of Rajasthan, 363 Bishnois sacrificed their lives to save Khejri trees.

Who could have thought that a protest could start just by hugging the tress, this is a true example of thinking outside the box.

INDIAN METHODOLOGY OF CREATIVE THINKING- JUGAAD



Indian people have enormous intellectual and conceptual powers.

The Indian icon of Jugaad is a methodology of optimizing the resources. It is a survival tactic that expresses a need to do what needs to be done, without regard to what is conventionally supposed to be possible.

Jugaad is used for solutions that bend rules, or a resource that can be used as such, or a person who can solve a complicated issue. Starting from farmers, traders, housewives also use jugaad to achieve more with the limited resources available to them.



THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

22

"Umeed pe duniya kayam hai aur India ki umeed jugaad pe."

As Indians we know this to be true. We not only do the best jugaads possible but also take pride in it. And why shouldn't we? Innovation is a hallmark of excellence and we certainly excel in this field. We don't need to follow the conventional way of doing things. It's about being different from the rest and that is what we are. Here are some photos that prove that Indians are the ultimate kings of *jugaad*

1. Now this is what you call an assembled PC



2. Tractor + Road roller = Troller



THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

23

3. Showered with creativity



4. Motor by day, bike by night



Conclusion

It is never easy to think outside the box, nor is it reflection of one's intelligence. For a given problem, some people tend to explore solutions in the unknown world, which requires creativity, mental toughness, agility and boldness.

Exploring an unknown world means 'to investigate the unused path leaving the psychological comfort zone'. It is thinking beyond the parameters of human consciousness and experience to see beyond the norm, to be a visionary.

Life is a journey and exploring the muddle is an adventure.