



Talent Development and Creativity

by Dr. Donald J. Treffinger

Occasionally, we hear the challenge that our focus on talent development and “student action planning” simply represents a cosmetic change or some new terminology for “gifted education.” The critic says, “You’re talking about the same things we have always discussed, but just using some different jargon to describe them.” We don’t agree. Our view is that, while talent development and student action planning do introduce new language, their substance and implications extend far beyond vocabulary changes or jargon. They involve fundamentally new orientations and directions in understanding and carrying out the goals, scope, and procedures of our field.

Talent development spans the lifespan, reminding us to seek ways to recognize, nurture, and apply many and varied talents among children, adolescents, and adults. It also involves our growing recognition that people’s talents, strengths, and sustained interest arise and grow in a particular context, and that shifting contexts can enhance or inhibit their recognition and development. Today, many in our field are moving beyond a conception of giftedness focused only on abilities or gifts that are presumed to exist entirely “within the head” of the individual (and

are hard-wired, or present/absent in any person). It is increasingly evident that talents arise from, and talented performances over time are influenced by, many social, cultural, or circumstantial (or climate) factors *outside* the person’s internal, testable cognitive abilities. Many factors influence the definition, development, and expression of talents in profoundly important ways, leading both researchers and practitioners towards new views of the nature of talents and interests.

The second way in which talent development and student action planning represent new directions, not simply rephrasing of traditional practices, involves “identification.” New and emerging directions challenge educators to look beyond traditional views of identification and selection models (“gifted or not gifted; in or out”). Instead, we are focusing on profiling students’ strengths and talents so that we can use many sources of data in a dynamic way to enhance our understanding of students’ characteristics and our decisions about educational programming or services that will be appropriate and challenging for the student. As we understand strengths and talents in new ways, we become involved in student action planning—a dynamic planning and problem-

solving-oriented process in which we use many kinds of data as a foundation for designing appropriate and challenging instruction for students.

The third unique and substantive element of our contemporary Levels of Service approach involves talent development—deliberate, systematic efforts to carry out flexible, multi-dimensional programs, drawing on many resources for learning in the school, in the community, and at home. Today’s dynamic understandings of talent, along with new student action planning models that focus on serving the

Continued on p. 2

Where To Find It

Talent Development and Creativity	1
Personalized Advanced Training Opportunities	3
Curriculum for Creative Learning: A Checklist	4
CCL email Updates	6
Guiding Students in Applying CPS Effectively	7
Northwood Conference	8
Expanding Opportunities for Accessing VIEW	8
New Funding Opportunities	8
Authentic Assessment, Talent Development, and Creativity .	10
2004 Summer Institutes	12
Renewal Time!	12

Editorial—

Continued from p. 1

student's needs, are challenging us to provide new learning opportunities for more students, more effectively and more appropriately in relation to their strengths and interests. We are moving away from "cookie-cutter" or "one-size-fits-all" programs to much more exciting approaches to programming.

Innovative and varied approaches to programming involve a dual task: responding appropriately (and flexibly) to the needs of students who already demonstrate very high levels of accomplishment in any talent area, *and* initiating deliberate actions to seek and nurture the talents of all students. Talent development challenges educators to respond in more varied and effective ways to the strengths, talents, and sustained interests of all students, in ways that are commensurate with each person's characteristics and needs. Thus, programming for talent development is more inclusive than exclusive, and seeks to diversify the school's

readiness to respond to any learner's strengths and talents. Schools in which there is a strong commitment to "differentiation of instruction," through learning-styles-based instruction, tiered lessons and assignments, or flexible grouping strategies discover that contemporary talent development programming "fits" naturally with their overall goals and mission.

As we continue the transition from narrow approaches to gifted programming (with fixed programs for labeled students selected on traditional criteria for inclusion or exclusion) into richer, more powerful efforts to recognize and nurture many talents among many students, we will be called on to discover and apply our own creativity and Creative Problem Solving skills as well as to nurture these skills in our students. When programming involves a dynamic, flexible process of spotting students' strengths and talents, assessing their needs, designing appropriate

and challenging learning opportunities for them, and delivering services in varied ways and places, our creativity and problem solving skills will be called forward! Educators, parents, community leaders, and students themselves will need to have powerful tools at their fingertips, to define opportunities and challenges and frame problems in constructive ways, to generate many educational responses (and support them with ingenuity and original strategies), and to plan creatively for action. It might be easier to set arbitrary criteria, include only a small group of students, and carry out "the gifted treatment" for them, but that is certainly much less than we are able to do for learners today, and in the long run, less satisfying not only for them, but for us as educators as well. Talent development and student action planning can become vehicles for educators to discover (or rediscover) and ignite (or reignite) the strengths and talents of their students—and in themselves as well!

Not Quite Over the Edge!



We thought we'd tell you that the dog ate our CD on the way to the office, but you've all heard *that one* before! Would you believe that the final copy actually fell into a pile of snow on the way to the shop? Well, the dog story might do better than that; not too many snow piles in Sarasota!

Actually, we have been upgrading our office technology: new computers, a new printer, operating system updates, and new internet access. In addition, the final two months of 2003 and the beginning of 2004 were unusually busy with professional projects

(during a period that is usually one of the quieter times of year). So, as you are well aware, this issue of *Creative Learning Today* is quite late in reaching you. We apologize, and we appreciate your patience and continuing support. We are already at work on new material for Volume 13, Number 1, which we plan to distribute in mid-March.

Personalized Advanced Training Opportunities at CCL

Are you interested in learning more about CPS, the LoS approach to talent development, or problem-solving styles? Would you benefit from advanced opportunities for studying these areas, without the need to enroll in an extended degree program? Do you have the skills and passion to become a creative producer in our field, or an effective trainer, presenter, and consultant for others (possibly as a member of CCL's leadership team)? Would you benefit from, and contribute to, a mentorship experience with Dr. Treffinger or another of CCL's senior leaders?

We are interested in developing and piloting personalized advanced study opportunities for a small number (2-4) highly qualified colleagues. These opportunities would include a blend of personal, face-to-face learning experiences, reading, writing, and interactive activities (web-based or via email, fax, and/or phone). For candidates who are selected for this program, we will plan and carry out a specific study program, designed to respond to their unique background, needs, and goals. Participants will have opportunities to:

- Obtain an intensive assessment and review of their present knowledge, skills, problem solving and leadership styles, and facilitation skills and experience.
- Extend their skills in applications, research, and development on CPS, talent development, or problem solving style (or projects involving combinations of those areas).
- Learn and expand their presentation, leadership, and consulting skills.
- Develop and prepare new materials, individually and

collaboratively with other CCL team members, for publication in both journal and book formats.

- Analyze and discuss new theory and research in the literature of our field and engage in scholarly dialogue with their mentors and colleagues on the CCL team.

We are planning this pilot program to reflect our commitment to innovative and effective learning opportunities for experienced professionals, to cultivate new leadership for the future of our field, and to build new "partnerships for productivity." Some guiding principles underlying the pilot program are:

- We must understand and respect unique learning characteristics, professional experiences, and varied styles in designing and carrying out advanced training.
- We should individualize and personalize learning opportunities for the mature professional's ability to formulate and pursue meaningful goals independently.
- Effective advanced training must emphasize active participation and application, with effective supervision and feedback.
- Experienced mentors should work closely with participants to encourage creative "connection-making" and effective use of learning in practical settings.
- Many and varied responsibilities lead to the need for training to occur in relatively short, intense time blocks followed by opportunities for review, personal study, and direct application.

As a prerequisite for participating in this pilot program you must have completed previous study of CPS, the LoS approach to talent development, and/or *VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style*. This may include previous participation in introductory courses, workshops, or training programs, or documentation of personal reading and study in the areas that will be the focus for advanced study. Prospective participants should be aware that the program will require at least two visits to Sarasota (at their own expense) for a minimum of five working days per visit, during the duration of the plan of study. This is an absolute requirement for participation in the program, and will not be waived for any reason. We consider personal, face-to-face relationships essential to the goals and purposes of this program.

The pilot program will begin with an application process. We will receive applications at any time, and review them individually. We will review applications based on the candidate's background and preparation, statement of goals and proximity, our assessment of the fit between the applicant's goals and the Center's priorities, and our judgment of the applicant's readiness to benefit from an advanced study relationship with the Center. The Center reserves the right to exercise its judgment in accepting or declining any application.

For candidates who are accepted for the pilot program, we will carry out an *initial assessment* stage, involving a detailed inventory of your skills, expertise, and style preferences in relation to the proposed plan of study. We will

Continued on p. 11

Curriculum for Creative Learning: A Checklist

By Don Treffinger

In 1996, John Feldhusen, Scott Isaksen, and I published a report on criteria for evaluating or developing creativity instructional materials. There have been many new developments and advances in the areas of curriculum and instruction during the seven years since that publication. This article presents an initial effort to review and update the original criteria we presented, and to formulate specific questions to guide you in examining, from a contemporary point of view, curriculum resources and instructional methods that seek to nurture productive thinking. These criteria may be useful in reviewing and evaluating published resources, or in planning and evaluating your own curriculum development efforts.

1. Build curriculum and instruction on a sound theoretical foundation

- A. Is there a specific statement of the theoretical foundation for creativity and creative learning on which the curriculum was based?
- B. Is the curriculum based on a single, well-stated theory? Or, if it is "eclectic," drawing from many theoretical models or approaches, is the synthesis well-stated and appropriate (rather than a "hodge-podge," patch-quilt assembled unsystematically from many sources)?
- C. Is the theoretical foundation presented accurately, and supported by appropriate citations?

2. Maintain balance between training and ease of use

- A. Is training needed to enable one to implement the curriculum successfully? If so, how much?
- B. Are the necessary skills and expectations clearly defined and stated explicitly?
- C. Is appropriate training readily available (through courses, workshops, seminars, and/or printed resources) to enable teachers to use the curriculum effectively?
- D. Does training include provisions for coaching and peer support?

3. Provide explicit goals and objectives

- A. Does the curriculum include appropriate goal statements and specific objectives for important thinking outcomes?
- B. Are the age or grade levels for which the curriculum is intended clearly identified, and are they appropriate?
- C. Does the curriculum reflect students' needs to apply strategies in different ways as they mature (i.e., provide for a "spiral" development and transfer of skills)?

4. Attend to language and metacognition

- A. Does the curriculum use natural, student-friendly language, and does it apply terminology in precise, concise, and consistent ways?
- B. Do the curriculum activities help the student learn the language or vocabulary associated with effective thinking?
- C. Does the curriculum promote and support the development of "executive" or management skills by students (e.g., helping them to

learn how to plan and organize their work, how to choose and use strategies, how to keep track of their efforts and document their progress)?

- D. Does the curriculum encourage students to practice monitoring their own thinking, decision making, and problem solving processes?
- E. Does the curriculum guide students in improving their ability to choose and apply thinking tools and strategies appropriately in various situations?
- F. Does the curriculum provide opportunities for students to be thoughtful about their own thinking and about group activities and methods, through appropriate "debriefing" of activities and experiences?

5. Consider structure, organization, format, and presentation

- A. Are the program components or materials complete, well-organized, clearly described, and readily available?
- B. Are the program components attractively prepared and presented?
- C. Are the activities and resources arranged and sequenced appropriately? Is the proposed sequence clearly stated, explained, and justified?
- D. Are detailed instructions or procedures provided to guide the teacher? Are the plans flexible so experienced teachers can modify and adapt them effectively?
- E. Does the program provide materials and activities appropriate for various age or experience levels?

6. Recognize and respond to individual differences and styles

- A. Does the curriculum or program include opportunities for students to draw upon and use their personal creativity characteristics as they engage in the learning activities?
- B. Does the curriculum or program include a variety of activities to respond to varied thinking and/or learning styles among students?
- C. Does the program provide opportunities for students to work at varied rates or different paces?
- D. Does the program include both individual and group thinking activities?
- E. Is the program appropriate for students' developmental levels, and does it provide materials for students of differing ability or learning levels?

7. Attend to social and cultural diversity

- A. Are the curriculum or program materials free from bias regarding gender, ethnicity, cultural

- background, or race?
- B. Are exercises and activities appropriate, given the setting or context in which you will use them? (Will your students understand the language, the setting, the examples, etc., which are used in the program?)
 - C. Does the curriculum or program provide opportunities for students to experience appropriate modeling of effective thinking (by teachers? by family members? by peers? through literature? through anecdotes or examples in the program?)
 - D. Are the materials appropriate in their content and examples for the age and experiences of the students for whom they are intended?
8. *Establish and maintain a supportive climate*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include situations or activities that contribute to establishing a climate for creativity?
 - B. Do the materials include guidelines, suggestions, and support for teachers in relation to maintaining a climate for creativity?
 - C. Do the activities provide specific opportunities for students to experience and apply the nine climate factors (e.g., provide challenge? allow for playfulness and humor? encourage dialogue and debate in constructive ways? create opportunities for risk-taking?)
9. *Create a physical arrangement conducive to creativity*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include guidelines, suggestions, and support for creating a stimulating and varied physical setting for creative learning?
 - B. Does the curriculum provide for physical activity, movement, and energetic, hands-on learning?
 - C. Does the curriculum provide for space and activities that involve quiet reflection?
 - D. Do the activities provide specific opportunities for students to explore and use a variety of places and spaces for creative learning?
 - E. Does the curriculum provide activities and resources that use a variety of learning technologies and media?
10. *Foster independent, self-directed learning*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include activities and resources that guide students gradually in learning to manage and direct their own learning?
 - B. Do the materials include guidelines, suggestions, and support for teachers regarding their role in helping students learn to work independently?
 - C. Do the activities provide resources to assist the students in managing, documenting, and evaluating their independent work and products?
 - D. Does the curriculum include activities that help students to continuously monitor and improve their own independent activities and results?
11. *Recognize and respond to students' interests and motivations*
- A. Does the program use situations, activities, or examples that are appropriate to the interests and experiences of the students for whom it is intended?
 - B. Will the program capture and sustain student interest?
 - C. Will students be motivated to do the program's activities and to practice the skills taught in the program?
 - D. When there is extrinsic motivation, involving competition and rewards, are students encouraged also to maintain a focus on the importance of their personal creativity, talent development, and their process goals?
12. *Promote active involvement and engagement*
- A. Does the program provide opportunities for active involvement and participation by the students?
 - B. Will students have opportunities for "first hand experience" with many applications of the thinking processes and methods taught in the program?
 - C. Are the experiences realistic (i.e., related to real world activities)?
 - D. Do students have opportunities to try out different roles in the activities?
13. *Teach and apply the basic concepts and guidelines for creative and critical thinking*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include activities that include the core functions of both creative thinking (generating options) and critical thinking (focusing options)?
 - B. Does the curriculum or program include opportunities for the students to learn and apply the guidelines for generating options *and* the guidelines for focusing options?
 - C. Do the activities illustrate and support the important principle of harmony or balance between generating and focusing?
 - D. Do the materials provide resources and support for teachers in helping students learn the core functions and guidelines, and in monitoring and guiding the students' performance?
14. *Teach and apply specific generating and focusing tools*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include activities that help students to learn and apply specific generating and focusing tools?
 - B. Do the materials include opportunities for students and teachers to identify, analyze, and discuss the tools, as well as when, how, and why to select and use certain tools?
 - C. Do the activities provide specific opportunities for students to consider ways to apply generating and focusing tools in other situations?
15. *Teach and apply a contemporary Creative Problem Solving model*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include opportunities for students to learn and practice the components, stages, and tools of Creative Problem Solving?

- B. Do the materials include guidelines, suggestions, and support for teachers in relation to modeling and guiding applications of CPS?
- C. Do the activities provide opportunities for students to learn and use the language and vocabulary of CPS when they are working on problems and challenges?
- D. Does the curriculum or program provide opportunities for students to consider ways of applying CPS in other situations in their life?
16. *Teach for application, synthesis, and transfer*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include activities that ask students to apply the knowledge and skills they are learning to new tasks?
- B. Do the materials include activities that call students to demonstrate transfer of the skills and knowledge they have learned to other relevant tasks or challenges?
- C. Do the activities represent the foundations, realistic, and real levels of the Creative Learning Model?
- D. Does the program provide resources to promote teaching for transfer? If so: by making principles explicit? providing criteria for judgment? providing practice in many areas? emphasizing or illustrating possibilities for application in many areas?
- E. Do the activities involve, or lead to, experiences that have real consequences or implications for action on the student's part?
- F. Do the activities provide for questioning that calls for higher level thinking, and for involving students in asking questions as well as answering them?
- G. Do the activities involve opportunities to seek or construct themes and patterns, to engage in stating and testing hypotheses, and to probe or investigate topics in depth?
17. *Encourage and support varied expressions and products*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include activities and resources that challenge students to express their ideas in imaginative and varied ways?
- B. Does the curriculum or program include activities and resources that involve the creation and sharing of products or results in a variety of formats?
- C. Are graphics and media used effectively to support student learning?
- D. Are students challenged to find and use other relevant learning resources?
- E. Does the curriculum or program include a variety of exercises or activities to provide choices for teachers and/or students?
18. *Consider appropriate assessment*
- A. Does the curriculum or program include specific resources (checklists, rating scales, observation schedules, test resources) to assist teachers in evaluating pupil performance and giving feedback to students?
- B. Are there provisions for, and resources to support, student self-assessment and peer or group evaluation, as well as resources for the teacher to use in assessing and evaluating students?
- C. Are the assessment resources related clearly to program objectives?
- D. Are "check points" or informal assessment methods incorporated in the content of the program?
- E. Do the supporting materials (manual, teacher's guide, etc.) include criteria, references, or other specific evaluation resources?
19. *Provide for research and evaluation*
- A. Has the curriculum or program been subjected to experimental evaluation?
- B. Do published research and evaluation reports, especially by researchers or evaluators other than the program's developers, support the effectiveness of the materials?
- C. Is there evidence that the program's effectiveness holds up well over time?
- G. Are users encouraged to provide feedback to the program developers?
- H. Is there evidence that feedback from users has influenced program development or revision?

Reference

- Treffinger, D. J., Feldhusen, J. F., & Isaksen, S. G. (1996). *Guidelines for selecting or developing materials to teach productive thinking*. Sarasota, FL: Center for Creative Learning.

Email Address Updates for CCL

Please make note of several email changes for contacting CCL. For general information or inquiries, please send messages to info@creativelearning.com. To submit orders for CCL products or program registrations, contact orders@creativelearning.com. You can reach Lyn Pondel, CCL's Office Administrator, by sending a message to lyn@creativelearning.com, and Don Treffinger's new office email address is don@creativelearning.com. You can also follow the links to our addresses on various pages at our website (www.creativelearning.com).

Guiding Students in Applying CPS Effectively

One of the Center for Creative Learning's major new development initiatives involves the creation of a set of practical resources to guide and support students (in the upper elementary grades or older) in applying CPS independently. The working title for this initiative is the "CPS Kit" project. It is scheduled for publication in 2004 by Prufrock Press.

Our interest in independent applications of CPS by students reflects a number of changes in our understanding of the CPS framework and its applications that have resulted from our research and experience with the process during the past decade. We might highlight these by comparing today's CPS framework ("CPS Version 6.1™") with previous versions.

Older Versions

- Primary focus on divergence.
- The "problem" often involved a concern, difficulty, or deficiency— "something wrong" "that needed to be "fixed" or "turned around."
- Depend heavily on a skillful, independent facilitator.
- Linear, prescriptive process; emphasis on "run through" of entire process.
- A single pathway through the process for any problem.
- Strong emphasis on group applications CPS; individual applications may be possible, but may not be "trustworthy."
- "The five (or six) step process"

Contemporary: CPS Version 6.1™

- Balance between generating and focusing.
- Opportunities, challenges, and exciting possibilities can be important starting points for CPS— emphasis on moving forward" in constructive ways.
- Possible for people to use their own knowledge of CPS and skills when applying CPS on their own.
- Dynamic, descriptive process; emphasis on selecting and applying components and stages as necessary.
- Multiple pathways for applying the process, taking into account the content of the task, the context, the people, and the method(s) available.
- Individuals or groups can make effective use of CPS of components, stages, and tools.
- CPS as a comprehensive system for managing change.

Given today's approach to CPS applications, our CPS Kit project addresses several goals. In the CPS Kit, we seek to provide students with resources that will contribute to their ability to:

- Identify an opportunity, challenge, goal, need, or concern that is of personal significance or meaning, and move from their current reality to a desired future.
- Apply CPS in a meaningful, personal way, working on their own (whether or not with the immediate guidance and direction of an experienced facilitator).
- Make effective, autonomous decisions about CPS components, stages, and tools, and about when, where, and how in will be appropriate to apply them.
- Develop and practice the important metacognitive skills that individuals need in order to apply process skills across a broad range of content topics or challenges.
- Grow in their competence as Creative Problem Solvers, their confidence in their own ability to use CPS, and their commitment (or "desire") to apply CPS to challenges at home, in school, or in the community.
- Learn and practice effective problem solving management skills— e.g., record-keeping, documentation, implementation, presentation, and evaluation— independently.

The CPS Kit will be useful to students, working individually, in pairs or teams, or in groups, for addressing a wide range of tasks or projects, including:

- Independent projects
- Service projects
- Classroom learning projects
- Planning events or programs
- Managing change in their life
- Working in clubs or groups (in or out of school)
- Life or career planning

For information about possible participation in pilot tests or experimental research using the Kit, contact the Center!

Expanding Opportunities for Accessing VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style

We are pleased to announce that we have established new policies that will make it easier and more flexible for qualified professionals to obtain and use VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style. In the past, prospective VIEW users were required to attend a "user qualification program" before they were eligible to purchase or use the instrument.

Under our new policy, which will be in effect by the time this newsletter reaches you, it is now easier for professionals to purchase and use VIEW. By visiting our website (www.creativelearning.com), the Problem Solving Style page allows you to download an application packet that describes the minimum qualifications required for you to receive approval to purchase and use VIEW. You can complete the required application form, transmit it by email, mail, or fax, and receive approval to purchase and use VIEW (usually within two business days after we receive your application). The qualifications are designed to ensure that VIEW users meet minimum standards regarding knowledge of testing and measurement principles and procedures to enable them to use and interpret VIEW in an appropriate, professional manner.

Once you have received approval of your application, you can purchase an initial User Package, which includes a technical manual, a detailed User's Guide, ten copies of the paper and pencil form of VIEW, and instructions on registering for the on-line edition. Subsequently, you can reorder the print edition in multiples of ten copies.

We will still offer a special training program to provide VIEW Users with additional support resources, guided practice in using, scoring, and interpreting VIEW, and several other benefits to build your expertise in applying VIEW effectively. Participants who complete this program also receive significant discounts on all subsequent purchases of VIEW (including use of the on-line edition). We hope that the new policy will make it possible for interested colleagues to be able to obtain and apply VIEW, while still offering benefits for those who make the additional investment in their professional development as VIEW users. Please visit our website, or contact us in person, for more information or to begin the application process.

Authors Wanted— No Experience Necessary!

Creative Learning Today is now moving into its 17th year of publication, and its 13th year originating from Sarasota. We need new ideas and manuscripts from our readers for each one of the four issues scheduled for 2004. Publishing in *Creative Learning Today* is an excellent way to share good ideas, successful practices, and action research with others who are interested in creativity and CPS, talent development, and learning styles. Articles can range in length from 500 to about 2,000 words, and you should write them in an informal, practical style; you do not have to be a research scholar to have worthwhile ideas to share with our readers!

15th Annual Northwood Conference on Creativity in Colleges and Universities

The 15th Annual International Conference on Creativity in Colleges and Universities will be held from July 15-18, 2004 at the Alden B. Dow Creativity Center at Northwood University in Michigan. The conference theme is, "Celebrating Individual Creativity: From Inspiration to Application."

The conference is "a global assembly of those who value, teach, and practice creativity." The sponsors report that the conference is intended for: "Academics, Teachers of Creativity, Creative Teachers, Scholars, Business and Industry Leaders, Consultants—anyone interested in expanding their Creative abilities." It seeks to provide a "stimulating opportunity to Interact, Learn, Create, and Celebrate, all in a supportive and nourishing environment." Creativity presentations at the conference will include "a gallery of hands-on experiences, impromptu sessions, in-depth research studies, and motivational events." You can learn more about the conference by visiting the Dow Center's website, which is:
<http://www.northwood.edu/abd/conference.html>

Proposals for presentations are welcome (but must be submitted by February 20, 2004). Submit Proposals either by e-mail (preferred) or by regular mail: creativity@northwood.edu / or Alden B. Dow Creativity Center, Northwood University, 4000 Whiting Drive, Midland, MI 48640. The phone is 989.837.4478.

New Funding Opportunities

2004 Igniting Creative Energy Challenge: *Making a Difference in Energy Consumption*

The Igniting Creative Energy Challenge program asks K-12 students and their supervising teachers to brainstorm innovative ways to make a difference in the way they consume energy. The project should have a full plan to implement their energy saving techniques in a larger community setting. The National Energy Foundation hopes students will learn more about energy and the environment and therefore, make lifelong responsible energy decisions. Student entries must demonstrate the theme "Igniting Creative Energy." They must also exhibit an understanding of what an individual, family or group can do to conserve energy in a home or community. Entries may take the form of science projects, essays, stories, artwork, photographs, music, video or website projects.

DEADLINE: February 21, 2004.

FUNDING: Four grand-prize winners will receive a hosted trip to Hawaii for themselves and one guest (value \$3,500 to \$4,000).

ELIGIBILITY: K-12 students and supervising teachers.

CONTACT: Igniting Creative Energy, National Energy Foundation, 3676 California Ave., Ste. A117, Salt Lake City, UT 84104; (800) 616-8326. Please visit the website for more details at www.ignitingcreativeenergy.org.

National Education Association Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) / Innovation Grants. *Implementing Creative and Unique Ideas Resulting in High Student Achievement*

Grants will support collaborative efforts by two or more colleagues to develop and implement creative and unique ideas that result in high student achievement. The proposed work should engage

students in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen their knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection. Break-the-mold ideas that focus on closing the achievement gap for underserved students are particularly encouraged. Grant funds may be used for resource materials, supplies, equipment, transportation, software, or scholar-in-residence. Although some funds may be used to support the professional development necessary to implement the innovative idea, the majority of grant funds must be spent on materials or educational experiences for students. Preference will be given to applicants who serve economically disadvantaged students.

DEADLINE: Ongoing, applications are reviewed three times a year.

FUNDING: Up to \$5,000.

ELIGIBILITY: U.S. public school teachers in grades K-12, public school education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at U.S. public colleges and universities.

CONTACT: The NEA Foundation, Attn: Innovation Grants, 1201 Sixteenth Street NW, Suite 416, Washington, DC 20036-3207. For criteria and program guidelines, visit the website at <http://www.nfie.org/programs/grantguides.htm>.

National Education Association Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) / Learning and Leadership Grants. *Funding Projects to Cultivate Professional Development*

Learning and Leadership Grants to individuals will fund the recipients to participate in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research.

Grants to groups will fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson study, or mentoring experiences for faculty or staff new to an assignment. All professional development must improve practice, curriculum and student achievement. Decisions regarding the content of the professional growth activities must be based upon an assessment of student work undertaken with colleagues and must be integrated into the institutional planning process. Grant funds may be used for fees, travel expenses, books, or other materials that enable applicants to learn subject matter, instructional approaches, and skills. Recipients are expected to exercise professional leadership by sharing their new learning with their colleagues. Preference will be given to members of the National Education Association.

DEADLINE: Ongoing, applications are reviewed three times a year.

FUNDING: Ranges from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

ELIGIBILITY: U.S. public school teachers in grades K-12, public school education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at U.S. public colleges and universities.

CONTACT: The NEA Foundation, Attn: Learning & Leadership Grants, 1201 Sixteenth Street NW, Suite 416, Washington, DC 20036-3207. For criteria and program guidelines, visit the website at <http://www.nfie.org/programs/grantguides.htm>.

Authentic Assessment, Talent Development, and Creativity

By Don Treffinger

In our recent work on assessing creativity and on “student action planning” for talent development in the Levels of Service approach, we have been revisiting many discussions of the relative strengths and limitations of many different kinds and sources of data about students’ characteristics, skills, and needs. We have looked closely, especially in relation to creativity, at the

“Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.”

(Albert Einstein)

relevance and role of tests, rating scales and checklists, self-report inventories, and a broad set of assessment tools and procedures described variously (and not always consistently) as performance assessment, alternative assessment, or authentic assessment.

The purpose of this article is to clarify the relevance and importance of authentic assessment for two major goals of our on-going work at the Center: talent development and productive thinking. For more information about the role of testing in creativity assessment, you may find it valuable to examine our 2002 report, “Assessing Creativity: A Guide for Educators,” published by the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented at the University of Connecticut. You may also wish to review the extensive data base of information about creativity assessment tools on the “Assessing Creativity” page of our website (www.creativelearning.com).

If you are interested in learning more about new rating scales and tools for assessing creativity that we are developing at the Center, please send us an email. We plan

to provide more information about our new project in this area in forthcoming issues of *Creative Learning Today*.

Authentic Assessment and Talent Development

The first question we might consider is, “How might authentic assessment contribute to our efforts to recognize students’ strengths and

talents and to plan for appropriate and challenging instruction?” We might identify several responses to this question. Authentic assessment:

- Guides us in recognizing students’ unique characteristics, strengths, talents, and sustained interests.
- Contributes to shifting the focus of identification from categorizing or labeling to planning for challenging instruction.
- Provides for assessment that is linked to gifted behaviors or creative productivity, not just to status indicators.
- Accommodates a wide range of talent domains, abilities, or “intelligences.”
- Lends itself readily to focus on higher level or more complex skills and processes.
- Is not limited by test ceilings or artificial measurement constraints.
- Enables documentation of complex products, projects, and accomplishments over sustained time periods.
- Is consistent with evaluation and documentation of creative productivity in the real world.

- Supports the development of self-direction and independent learning.

Authentic Assessment and Productive Thinking

We receive many inquiries about ways to assess creativity, creative thinking, critical thinking, or Creative Problem Solving skills, for “identifying creative students” or for evaluating program goals relating to creative or critical thinking or CPS. Usually, people tell us that they want a “test” to obtain “objective” or numerical data that will provide “hard data.” With some probing and discussion, many of the callers (but not all) recognize the contradiction inherent in such a request. Why would they expect complex, high-level, original behavior to be measured by an overall “score” on a simple test? However, their need is genuine in important ways. It is important for them to find practical ways to deal with questions of student assessment or documenting and evaluating both student work and program goals. Authentic assessment, and openness to the use of many different sources of data, can become part of the way to structure an appropriate response to their needs.

Words of Caution

We should also be careful, lest we create the impression that, in “authentic assessment,” we have found a panacea, or discovered a complete, all-purpose, fool-proof solution to the challenges of assessing and documenting students’ strengths, talents, and productive thinking skills. Authentic assessment can have many drawbacks and pitfalls, too, especially if it is grasped as a new fad, and approached without careful planning and preparation.

First, authentic assessment does not “replace” all other forms of assessment or evaluation. It is **one** set of tools, not **THE** set of tools. Second, as in any complex and dynamic area of investigation, there are still many unanswered questions about authentic assessment. These involve determining appropriate ways to assess the validity and reliability of such assessments. This may be especially challenging when the constructs they are seeking to assess may not conform readily to our customary notions of test validity or reliability. (What are the independent criteria for validating such assessments? How long will it take for the validating evidence to be obtained? Does one’s creativity

training or preparation. Some of the *potential* drawbacks and pitfalls of authentic assessment, if not planned and carried out well, include:

- Unreliability of assessment or “slippery standards”
—some who accept everything
—others who accept nothing
- Biased evaluation of some students
- Hodge-podge of materials, quality levels, standards, procedures
- Over-emphasis on “appearances”
- Confusion about goals, uses, maintaining, responsibilities.
- Gaps in knowledge base may go unnoticed (by teachers or students)

Advanced Training Opportunities

Continued from p. 3

use these data to formulate a specific plan of study, with specific objectives, time lines, and outcome expectations. The plan of study will include reading and study on your own, participating in experiences and activities with the guidance and support of Dr. Treffinger or your Center Staff mentor, writing and development projects, field-testing or research experiences, and conferences for feedback and discussion. The plan of study will also include details of your personal working meetings in Sarasota. Finally, the plan will identify the ways in which your performance and accomplishments in the advanced study program will be evaluated and documented.

Depending on the response we receive to the pilot program, we may expand opportunities for future participation on a fee basis. For the limited pilot project, however, we will offer the program on a no-fee basis. Because of the demands this pilot will place on your time and effort and ours, we expect to be highly selective; we will hold strong expectations for the mutual benefits between the applicants’ goals and the Center’s priorities and projects. If you are interested in applying, please contact Don Treffinger by email (don@creativelearning.com) by March 31, 2004.

Authentic assessment holds considerable promise for effective application in creativity assessment and in student action planning for talent development.

always remain at a constant and consistent level of expression and productivity?) Third, there can be complex issues of practicality in managing, administering, and applying the results of authentic assessments. Effective assessment of many complex kinds of expertise and productivity may require sustained time and on-going observation and documentation, which may be extremely difficult to accomplish (especially in times that emphasize giving everyone a machine-scored test so the scores will be available quickly for the local newspapers). Fourth, as in any area of assessment, authentic assessment tools and procedures can be misused. The same problem exists for more traditional, psychometric assessment methods, of course; tests can be used wisely, with sensitivity and skill, or misused. But we must be cautious to avoid the erroneous belief that authentic assessment is “easier” than other kinds of assessment, or that it can be applied by people with little or no

- Without training and support, teachers do not develop skills, and benefits are not realized.
- Perceived as another “fad”
- Loss of valuable and useful data
- Confusion in messages sent to parents
- Process becomes mechanical, routine; students do not reflect and learn
- Adds more to the load of inexperienced teachers who are unprepared for it.

We believe that, with proper caution and commitment to appropriate standards of development, field-testing, and training, authentic assessment holds considerable promise for effective application in creativity assessment and in student action planning for talent development. If you are interested in learning more about this area, or in the possibility of working with us on continuing development initiatives, please contact the Center.

Summer 2004 Professional Development Institutes

Please help us “get out the word” about these opportunities! We will offer two new professional development Institutes in Sarasota this summer. These programs will focus on new developments and directions in the areas of talent development and Creative Problem Solving (CPS). The programs will be offered successively, enabling participants to attend either or both programs with a single trip.

Institute on Talent Development: The Levels of Service Approach (July 7-10)

This program will provide an in-depth presentation of the Levels of Service (LoS) approach to talent development. It will provide individuals or teams an opportunity to learn the latest developments in our contemporary approach to talent development in education. We will deal with: an overview of the LoS approach; strategies, tools and resources for implementing LoS at the school, school district, regional, or state level; and procedures for effective program planning (or re-design of existing programs). This program will begin at **3:00 PM. on Wednesday, July 7**, and conclude by **2:00 PM. on Saturday, July 10**.

Institute on Creative Problem Solving (CPS) in Education (July 11-14)

The current Creative Problem Solving framework—CPS Version 6.1™— is a powerful but practical set of tools and resources to help individuals and groups use creative and critical thinking, solve problems, and manage change. The CPS framework builds on more than five decades of research, development, and practical applications. CPS has been applied successfully in businesses, schools, churches, and other organizations worldwide. People of all ages can learn and apply CPS effectively. In educational settings, CPS Version 6.1™ can be applied in many important ways. This Institute will provide practical instruction to guide individuals or teams in applying CPS with students at all levels and with adults. This Institute will begin at **3:00 PM. on Sunday, July 11**, and close at **2:00 PM. on Wednesday, July 14**.

Attention, Subscribers: It's Renewal Time!

All subscriptions to Creative Learning Today are for the calendar year (January through December). If you have not already sent in your renewal, and you want to keep CLT coming your way, we need to hear from you before the end of February. Your renewal for 2004 is just \$20.00 US. You may renew by mail, or with a credit card, by phone (941.342.9928), by fax (941.342.0064), or by email to our office at (orders@creativelearning.com).

Purpose and Subscriptions

Editor: Dr. Don Treffinger

Purpose: To share new ideas and practical strategies for productive thinking, and talent development, and learning style; information about and reviews of new resources; and opportunities for networking among our readers.

CLT is published quarterly. The annual subscription rate is \$20 (US funds), order #8002. Please enclose payment by check (US funds), Visa or MasterCard with your subscription order. Subscriptions are for the calendar year; new subscriptions receive the current issue and any back issues for the calendar year.

Direct all subscription inquiries, payments, and changes of address to Center for Creative Learning, Inc., Subscription Department, P.O. Box 14100-NE Plaza, Sarasota, Florida, USA, 34278-4100; Fax: 941.342.0064, Phone: 941.342.9928

Contact the Center by e-mail at:

info@creativelearning.com

Creative Learning Today,

ISSN #0895-9234. Copyright ©2003 by Center for Creative Learning.

Quotation permitted provided credit is given to *Creative Learning Today* as the source.

**Visit us on the web at:
www.creativelearning.com**

