



Building Powerful Teams

Editorial by Dr. Donald J. Treffinger

Many aspects of life and work today call on people to be “team players,” or to be able to work collaboratively with others to attain shared goals. We find that this is an important goal in nearly all settings in which people gather— schools (both among adults and within classrooms), church groups, arts groups, professional and fraternal organizations, and businesses.

Effective teamwork does not come about by chance or just by wishing for it. Powerful, productive teams are the result of deliberate, sustained efforts and the team members’ knowledge of, and ability to apply, a number of important skills. We’ve also learned that, in all of those dimensions of teamwork, both style and Creative Problem Solving (CPS) can make valuable contributions.

This issue’s editorial will provide a basic outline (just a “bare bones” survey) of the essential teamwork skills that several of us at the Center have culled from the literature in education and organizational studies over the past six months, and brief notes about several important potential linkages to style and CPS. I hope that this outline will stimulate our readers to join us in some new

dialogue about several follow-up questions, including:

- How might we assess knowledge and application of these skills? To what extent are they skills we might assess in individuals, or to what extent might it be necessary to observe and document them in team activities? What might checklists or rubrics include for assessing these skills?
- Are teamwork skills essentially similar or different in relation to age, task, or group settings?
- In what ways might teamwork skills be taught or nurtured?
- How might we document the proposed contributions of style and CPS to effective teamwork through appropriate research?

Some of these questions may have answers (or at least evidence that will help give form and shape to appropriate answers) in the literature that we are still investigating. Others may be springboards for new research and development issues. We hope to share more information about these questions and challenges in future issues of *Creative Learning Today*, and we invite readers who

have experience and expertise in these areas to share their knowledge with all of us in future articles, too.

We can summarize our initial search for the essential elements of powerful, effective teams in five key factors.

1. Clarity and Alignment on Purpose

- Common goals, clearly stated
- Acceptance of goals by all team members

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- Support provided for the team's efforts
- Sense of opportunity and challenge

How Style and CPS Contribute.

Knowing and responding to style diversity helps team members to share and clarify the interpretations of tasks on goals on which the team is working. Style also helps individuals on a team to identify their own "buy in" to the goals, and to identify the unique strengths and contributions they bring to the team's efforts. CPS skills provide tools that teams can use to "bridge" the diversity among their members and to apply when they are seeking to understand the nature of their challenge, to generate options and focus their thinking efficiently and effectively, and to prepare for action. Knowing and using a deliberate, but flexible approach to CPS helps teams to recognize and build on each member's strengths and to apply a common language and set of skills to their work on complex tasks.

2. Shared Responsibility and Leadership

- Clear understanding of each team member's role
- Interdependence; empowering and serving others
- All members feel that they have opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways

How Style and CPS Contribute.

When there is a commitment to sharing responsibility and leadership, and to building effective relationships or collaboration among team members, awareness of styles helps each person to feel comfortable in bringing his or her personal strengths forward. The team recognizes its members'

styles as strengths to be valued, rather than distractions, and validates the unique ways each person contributes and adds value to the team effort. In addition, awareness of style can help a team to be aware of its possible "blind spots" and to seek additional input or support. When the team members also know and feel comfortable with CPS tools, an emphasis on shared responsibility and leadership leads to opportunities for anyone in the group to participate effectively in the group's problem-solving tasks, and to move into a facilitative role when appropriate.

3. High Communication

- Trust
- Openness
- Honesty
- Dialogue and two-way communication
- Active listening
- Freedom from threat

How Style and CPS Contribute.

When there is strong, effective, two-way communication among the members of a team, awareness of styles contributes to the team's strength and success by providing a common and constructive language for describing and discussing both similarities and differences of views and ideas. Awareness of style diversity helps the team to be constructive and forward-looking in its communication, and to be aware of where tensions may arise. As in other areas of team performance, CPS skills provide the team with tools that all members can agree to use—a "neutral repertoire" of tools to help them transact their business effectively and with clarity and direction. Knowing and using the vocabulary of CPS also enables team members to communicate accurately and to avoid or overcome possible misunderstandings about the tasks at hand.

4. Respect for People and Ideas

- Valuing diverse ideas and perspectives
- Understanding each other's strengths and needs
- Ability to manage disagreement and conflict constructively
- "Analysis without Attack"
- Commitment to collaboration

How Style and CPS Contribute.

When team members strive deliberately to establish and maintain attitudes and a climate of respect, style provides information they can use to be "different but alike." The team's awareness of styles and their implications fosters interpersonal understanding and empathy, and helps the team to deal openly and positively with areas of disagreement. Style awareness may also help team members recognize differences that may be stylistic (or matters of preference or approach) rather than substantive, and thus may help the team to address those differences effectively. CPS tools (such as the Paired Comparison Analysis or PCA tool, for example) also help teams to identify areas of agreement on which to build, and to be precise and accurate in identifying the nature of their disagreements. When teams can apply their CPS skills before emotions "boil over" and people become entrenched in their positions, they will be more likely to seek and accept productive solutions and mutually acceptable directions. Anticipating possible areas of disagreement, and addressing them constructively and proactively with specific tools, helps teams build respect for people and their ideas.

5. Focus on Process and Results

- Balancing “team spirit” and “task achievement”
- Shared rules and procedures
- On-going feedback and commitment to using it
- Pride and investment in the task and the results
- Freedom to explore
- Knowing and using process tools

How Style and CPS Contribute.

Many of our readers may be familiar with one of my favorite cartoons (from a book called, “What’s So Funny About Science”), in which one scientist looks at another’s complex chalkboard of equations, and says, “I think you need to be more explicit in Step 2.” On the board we read,

“Step 2: Then a miracle occurs.” Powerful teams that achieve high levels of success do not come about “because a miracle occurs.” Their members have to work deliberately to accomplish their excellent results, consistently over an extended period of time. Awareness of style helps team members to use their time and efforts effectively and efficiently. The team’s ongoing efforts include giving attention and energy to balancing varied needs of different styles in order to support group productivity. The team must also work explicitly to assign specific tasks and to delegate responsibilities appropriately (to make best use of the members’ strengths), and to select and apply process tools that will help them to perform their tasks effectively (and not just to use

their “favorite” tools over and over, as if one tool were best for every task).

As the saying goes, “watch this space...” throughout the year ahead for new information and resources regarding the positive contributions of style and CPS to the tasks of building powerful teams.

Special Book Sale!

We’ve made a special purchase that allows us, for a limited time only, to offer you a saving of more than 30% on a set of CPS books. A separate PDF announcement will be mailed with this issue of *CLT*.

University of Louisville Announces Faculty Positions Available

We have been informed of faculty positions available in three different departments in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at the University of Louisville. The University of Louisville is a growing metropolitan research university of approximately 21,000 students in an urban area with a population of over one million. The *CEHD* includes approximately 100 FTE faculty and serves approximately 2500 students in four departments: Leadership, Foundations, and Human Resources; Health Promotion, Physical Education, and Sports Studies; Educational and Counseling Psychology; and Teaching and Learning. Visit the University of Louisville website at www.louisville.edu for more information. Louisville is a thriving community that is increasingly diverse and known for its theatre, support of the arts, medical facilities, competitive schools, geographic centrality and

its moderate climate. It is the 16th largest city in the nation and has the 23rd largest school district.

The Department of Educational & Counseling Psychology (ECPY) is seeking outstanding scholars in the areas of Counseling Psychology, Counselor Education, and College Student Personnel. Contact the Educational and Counseling Psychology Search Committee, c/o Rose Wade, Unit Business Manager, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292, or by e-mail: rose.wade@gwise.louisville.edu

The Department of Leadership, Foundations and Human Resource Education is seeking *one or more* outstanding scholars in two primary areas: K-12 School Leadership and Administration and Educational Research and Evaluation. Contact the Educational Leadership or Educational Research and Evaluation Search

Committee c/o Marji Settles, Unit Business Manager at the University of Louisville, or by e-mail at marji@louisville.edu /.

The Department of Teaching and Learning is seeking outstanding scholars who are: knowledgeable about key issues in teacher education, excellent researchers, original thinkers with creative ideas, passionate about their content areas, spirited collaborators and avid learners. One or more appointments are anticipated in each of several areas, including: Social Studies Education; Urban Education; Reading and Literacy Education; Mathematics Education; Science Education; and Special Education. For more information contact: Chair, Teaching and Learning Search Committee, c/o Kathy Woods, Unit Business Manager, e-mail: kat@louisville.edu

Perceived Creativity and Leadership

By Dr. James A. Reffel

Clark's (1997) definition of creativity focused on the attitudes, processes, and acts of creation that express the uniqueness of the person and draw upon an integration of all of the functions of the universe of intelligence. Clark (2002) proposed that creativity is a holistic combination of cognitive, intuitive, affective, and physical functions of the brain. Creativity can also be characterized by uniqueness, originality, and the ability to make something novel and useful (Tardif & Sternberg, 1988). Torrance (1962) defined creativity as the process of sensing gaps, forming and testing hypotheses, and communicating the results.

Creativity may manifest itself through a variety of traits, personality characteristics, or behaviors (Daniels, 1997; Torrance & Sisk, 1997). Treffinger, Young, Selby, and Shepardson (2002) categorized personal creativity characteristics into four categories: generating ideas (e.g., fluency); digging deeper into ideas (e.g., analyzing); openness and courage to explore ideas (e.g., curiosity, risk-taking); and listening to one's inner voice (e.g., awareness of creativity, self-direction).

These definitions and characteristics of creativity may have parallels with definitions and characteristics of leadership. Bean and Karnes (2001) suggested that there are connections between effective leadership skills and creative thinking. Goertz (2000) found a relationship between creative traits and leadership. Fu, Canaday, and Fu (1982) found links between creative fluency and successful leadership in young children. However, Feldhusen and Pleiss (1994) found significant correlations between leadership and dramatic skills and

dramatic skills and creativity, but not between leadership and creativity. While the idea of a link between creativity and leadership is not new, Simonton (1994) actually viewed creativity as a specific type of leadership.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) proposed that transformational leaders inspire performance beyond ordinary expectations as they create a sense of mission and encourage new ways of thinking, in contrast to transactional leaders who motivate through rewards and negative feedback. Transformational leaders exhibit some of the same characteristics typified in creative individuals. Transformational leadership had a positive impact on dimensions of creativity (Sosik, Kahai, & Avolio, 1998) and creativity in groups (Jung, 2001).

Taylor (1986) recommended the increasing focus on creative and leadership talents:

"My proposal for two types of future focus is that creative talents and leadership talents become increasingly important and widespread in use in searching for and in cultivating growth in students. A third focus could be a combination of the two, namely creative leadership (p. 262)."

Schlichter (1997) stated that academic, productive thinking, decision making, planning, forecasting, and communication talents assist students in processing knowledge to create new solutions to problems. The present study investigated the hypothesized relationship between perceived creativity (Khatena & Torrance, 1998) and leadership skills (Karnes & Chauvin, 2000).

Method

Participants and Procedures.

Thirty-nine undergraduate volunteers (juniors and seniors) completed the *Leadership Skills Inventory* (Karnes & Chauvin, 2000) and the *Khatena-Torrance Creative Perception Inventory* (Khatena & Torrance, 1976). Participants were enrolled in a course on psychoeducational aspects of early childhood education, which is required for students pursuing degrees in education. Most of the subjects were female (92%), which is generally consistent and representative of elementary education programs.

Instruments. The *Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI)* (Karnes & Chauvin, 2000) included nine categories of leadership skills:

- Fundamentals of Leadership are skills which include defining terms and identifying leadership styles.
- Written Communication includes outlining skills, writing a speech, and doing research reports.
- Speech Communication are skills which include defining one's viewpoint on issues, giving a speech, and critique.
- Character-Building are skills which include values, free choice, and affirmation.
- Decision-Making are skills which include gathering data, analysis and drawing conclusions.
- Group Dynamics are skills which involve facilitating, compromise, and consensus.
- Problem-Solving are skills which include the identification and solving of various problems.
- Personal skills include self-confidence, sensitivity, and personal grooming.

- Planning skills include goals setting, developing timelines, and strategy formation.

These scales are designed to help individuals obtain estimates of each of these leadership skill areas. The Kuder-Richardson internal consistency formula yielded reliability estimates ranging from .65 to .95 (Karnes & Chauvin, 2000). Jolly and Hall (2004) reported internal consistency reliability ranging from .80 to .93 on the subtests. The manual provided evidence for criterion-related validity (Karnes & Chauvin, 2000). Shaunessy and Karnes (2004) reported that the LSI has been recognized as one of the few instruments designed to measure leadership skills in young people.

The *Khatena-Torrance Creative Perception Inventory* (Khatena & Torrance, 1976) consisted of two inventories, *What Kind of Person are You* (WKOPAY) and *Something About Myself* (SAM). Both yield a creative perception index standard score and several factor scores. Only the SAM inventory was used in the present study. The SAM factors were Environmental Sensitivity (Factor I), Initiative (Factor II), Self-Strength (Factor III), Intellectuality (Factor IV), Individuality (Factor V), and Artistry (Factor VI) (Khatena & Torrance, 1998). These factors are defined as follows:

- Environmental Sensitivity refers to openness to the ideas of others. Initiative refers to directing, producing new products, and bringing about changes.
- Initiative involves directing and/or playing leads in plays, producing new formulas or new products, and bringing changes in rules or ways things are done.
- Self-Strength involves multiple talents and risk-taking.

- Intellectuality involves intellectual curiosity.
- Individuality relates to the preference for working alone.
- Artistry includes the production of artwork, songs, dances, or stories.

The technical manual contained information on reliability and validity for the SAM. Khatena & Torrance (1998) reported that the internal consistency for SAM, established by using the split-half method corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula, was $r = .92$. They also provided support for content, construct, and criterion-related validity for the instrument.

Results

Significant correlation coefficients were found between overall creative scores and leadership fundamentals, $r = .45$, $p < .01$ and personal skills, $r = .35$, $p < .05$. As shown in Table 1 on the following page, significant relationships were also found between factors of creativity (e.g., environmental sensitivity, initiative, and intellectuality) and leadership skills (e.g., character building, decision-making, leadership fundamentals, personal skills, and written communication skills).

Discussion

Significant correlation coefficients between the SAM total, and the LSI supported the hypothesis that there are relationships between a general index of creativity and certain leadership components. The SAM inventory is based on the rationale that creative functioning is reflected in the personality characteristics of the individual, thinking strategies, and product creation (Khatena & Torrance, 1998). The LSI component of fundamentals of leadership included aspects of defining

terms and identifying leadership styles. The LSI component of personal skills included self-confidence, sensitivity, and personal grooming. While it appears that there is some relationship between these LSI components and overall creativity, much of the variance remains unexplained.

The SAM factors (e.g., environmental sensitivity, initiative, and intellectuality) were also correlated with the scores on the LSI. Environmental Sensitivity refers to openness to the ideas of others. Initiative involves directing and/or playing leads in plays, producing new formulas or new products, and bringing changes in rules or ways things are done. Intellectuality involves intellectual curiosity. These appear to be components of both creativity and leadership.

The LSI components of character building, decision-making, leadership fundamentals, personal skills, and written communication skills were related to scores on the SAM. These also appear to be components of both creativity and leadership.

More research is needed to explore the various other components of leadership and creativity. It should also be noted that there are high inter-correlations among the dimensions of the LSI (see Table 1). The authors claim that these dimensions are independent (Karnes & Chauvin, 2000); however, the high inter-correlations may call that independence into question. Caution should be used, therefore, in the interpretation of these leadership dimensions.

It may be fruitful to further investigate the link between the environmental sensitivity (SAM factor) and leadership and the relationships between leadership fundamentals (LSI component)

and overall creativity (particularly initiative and intellectuality). While some researchers have found correlations between leadership and creativity (Fu, Canaday, & Fu, 1982; Goertz, 2000) and others not (Feldhusen & Pleiss, 1994), it may be useful to further refine the definition of leadership. Perhaps exploring creativity within the context of transformation leaders (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) would be productive. It may also be beneficial to continue to develop and refine measures of leadership consistent with various models (i.e., transformational leaders).

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Table 1:
Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients between the SAM and the LSI

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
1. SAM environ. sensitivity	-	.20	.26	.03	.18	.07	.44**	.29	.33*	.15	.38*	.33*	.26	.31	.32*	.24
2. SAM initiative		-	.55***	.42**	.05	.48**	.69***	.36*	.15	.05	.09	.11	.23	.28	.22	.12
3. SAM self-strength			-	.45**	.19	.19	.73***	.23	.28	.04	.25	.24	.20	.28	.22	.14
4. SAM intellectuality				-	.33*	.35*	.72***	.35*	.06	.01	.04	.17	.10	-.10	.16	.11
5. SAM individuality					-	-.04	.45**	.03	.01	.02	.10	.06	.04	.04	.20	.13
6. SAM artistry						-	.51***	.29	.13	-.04	-.22	-.18	-.10	-.06	.04	-.10
7. SAM Total							-	.45**	.29	.11	.19	.27	.25	.23	.35*	.22
8. LSI fundamentals								-	.47**	.50***	.48**	.44**	.55***	.32*	.50***	.54***
9. LSI written communication									-	.60***	.40*	.37*	.70***	.46**	.30	.59***
10. LSI speech communication										-	.67***	.60***	.72***	.57***	.71***	.72***
11. LSI character-building											-	.66***	.67***	.52***	.72***	.63***
12. LSI decision making												-	.71***	.50***	.58***	.64***
13. LSI group dynamics													-	.72***	.58***	.88***
14. LSI problem-solving														-	.55***	.66***
15. LSI personal															-	.70***
16. LSI planning skills																-

*p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. Participants (n = 39)

Innovative Leadership in Today's Demanding Marketplace: Applications of VIEW in the World of Business

By Bruce Esposito and Steve Roehm

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We live in a world in which a single idea from an eighteen year-old mind can change the destiny of the music industry, and probably the movie industry. It's a world in which a small regional airline targeted people who did not fly because of cost, and now has the highest market capitalization of any airline in the industry, built on the concepts of very low cost, no in-flight food, no reserved seating, high reliability, and no hub and spoke system. Such ideas are the currency of the kind of mental productivity that is needed to compete in a customer-responsive, competency-focused, variable-cost, and infrastructure-resilient manner to a rapidly changing marketplace that expects innovation "On Demand." Key to our ability to respond to this challenge is our need to leverage our human assets as effectively as we can. In this article we will review the capabilities of an instrument that can help us to answer questions like:

- How might we leverage our creative strengths and those of others to respond to customer demands presented by the marketplace?
- How might we understand our strengths and weaknesses with respect to our creative problem solving style when focused on our core competencies?
- How might the awareness and knowledge of our personal styles help us to select and use Creative Problem Solving methods and tools that promote more effective communication, teamwork, and cost-effective, resilient solutions?

In this article we discuss how understanding the problem-solving style of individuals within organizations can have strong positive impact on how they find and implement strategic innovation initiatives. We will share several examples of how individuals and executive teams have used VIEW (Selby, Treffinger, Isaksen, & Lauer, 2002) to better manage their human resources in pursuing strategic innovation.

Implications of VIEW for Organizations

VIEW provides us with a powerful tool to use with individuals and management teams to help them to harness and realize their potential. Since it is easy to administer, score, and interpret, it is readily accessible to individuals and larger organizations alike. IBM was recently asked to make a presentation on Innovation and Creativity to more than 150 executives and managers from a worldwide utility company facing a major business transformation. We touched on the VIEW instrument and how its results could impact the successful implementation of their vision by helping them to make the most of their human assets. We were told later that this brief presentation, and the VIEW concepts in particular, were a topic of frequent discussion in the planning meetings and work sessions that followed giving them a basis to understand the impact of their actions to make change happen, and to help to make it "stick." We were told that, "the simplicity and power of the concepts were picked up in a heartbeat."

VIEW can help individuals to gain important insight into how they are creative and how they approach problems alone and as part of a group. It is more important for them to learn to appreciate their creative style and how to optimize and leverage their creative strengths than to attempt to "mold" their behavior to represent an unnatural and inappropriate stereotype of "a creative person." There are many valid ways to be creative, not just one. Results from VIEW can help individuals to recognize, describe, and appreciate their problem-solving style preferences.

In organizational settings, VIEW can help organizational members to better appreciate their creative diversity and to manage their strengths more effectively. For more than three years we have been working with clients in an offering called the Strategic Innovation (SI) Workshop, run by IBM's Executive Business Institute, at locations around the world, to help them to understand how to pursue strategic innovation initiatives in their businesses. As part of that program we have used VIEW to help the executive teams to understand their own problem solving style, and how it can help them to pursue successful implementations of these initiatives. Our experience to date is that style knowledge can be a strong, supportive, and complementary element in their planning and execution; consider the following three examples from several North American sessions.

Large Supermarket Chain

First, we worked with the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and

direct reports for a large super-market chain. They were looking to build a new team that could drive the business and IT communities to collaboratively apply technology to deliver high quality and high value solutions to their company. Specifically, they were seeking to instill innovative technologies to drive down cost through improvements in their supply chain, and technical infrastructure. The team felt strongly that if they could not get moving quickly they would be run over by their competition.

ness. They now understood that they were ready to take risk, and needed to balance that risk with strong Developer thinking to ensure its success. They were compatible in their Manner of Processing favoring an external style of interacting. In their Ways of Deciding scores they favored a Task rather than People orientation in their preferences – something we have found to be common to most of the business groups where we have administered the VIEW instrument. This would ensure that they ended up with sound task resolution, but

Explorers to attack their challenge. To the delight of the group they discovered that their newly appointed e-business Solution Center VP was a very strong Explorer, and was balanced by an IS Director of Group Systems who was more moderate in OC preference. The leader and the rest of the team quickly recognized and appreciated that the strong Explorer e-business Solution Center VP would be challenging them with radical change, and that it would be up to them to find the innovative and practical path that would lead to success for their company.

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Our SI program was a critical early step in the formation of this new Information Technology (IT) management team that was hand-picked and headed by the Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the group. The IT Director of Store operations and their CIO leader had Orientation to Change (OC) scores that were near the mean of the general population norms. The rest of the team, which included directors of Applications, Operations and Security, and Manager of eCommerce were all more on the Explorer side. When the CIO saw the distribution of scores favoring the Explorer style, to balance his more moderate preference, he and the rest of the group understood that, together, they were well-positioned to face their challenge.

They needed to drive pilots and prototypes for the use of new technologies, while maintaining high reliability and cost effective-

ness. They now understood that they were ready to take risk, and needed to balance that risk with strong Developer thinking to ensure its success. They were compatible in their Manner of Processing favoring an external style of interacting. In their Ways of Deciding scores they favored a Task rather than People orientation in their preferences – something we have found to be common to most of the business groups where we have administered the VIEW instrument. This would ensure that they ended up with sound task resolution, but

Large Insurance Firm

Second, we worked with a large Life Insurance firm, who brought the executive team responsible for launching their first e-business presence in the marketplace. Their objective was to infuse innovation by focusing on their core competencies, using e-business to be more responsive to their customers while controlling their cost. They were primarily Line of Business executives with two key Information Systems (IS) members, and led by the Vice President (VP) of Group Strategy to address this critical mission. It was a new team with a leader who had a moderate Explorer style.

The VP had formed a well-balanced team of Developers and

VIEW focused their appreciation for the diversity of styles on their team and the power that it would bring to their project. Prior to this session they knew that they were “different,” but did not understand how to balance those differences to their advantage. Their Manner of Processing results made them aware that they had a wide range of preferred styles. Acknowledging this, they discussed how to ensure that both the External and Internal styles could be appropriately included as they worked together as a team.

Their preferences for Ways of Deciding were all very strongly skewed toward the Task side. As a result of our SI program, and the insights provide by VIEW, they began to provide equal focus to the people and cultural changes required, as well as to the technology decisions, inherent in their e-business initiative.

Very Large Financial Services Firm

Last, we worked with a very large Financial Services firm, with significant focus on Property and Casualty (P&C), Life, Auto and Small and Medium business insurance. The attendees represented a mature IT executive team responsible for all IT application

development, who led over sixty managers and eleven hundred staff. Their objective was to be more progressive in developing a balanced portfolio of innovative offerings so that they would be viewed as more responsive to their customers and leaders with e-business in their industry. They came to IBM for a highly tailored two-day SI event to explore the process of strategic innovation. On the first day we scheduled only 90 minutes on the concepts of Creativity, including a brief twenty-minute overview of VIEW without individual assessments. In an end-of-day checkpoint of the agenda for day two of the program, the executive team unanimously requested that we add a more extensive discussion of VIEW and its implications, and insisted on completing the instrument that evening so that they could see how they scored. The next afternoon we had a lively 90-minute session focused on VIEW, their scores, and the implications of their styles for their mission. They had a balanced OC profile on their executive team with strong Explorer and Developer players, along with a healthy group of OC-centric players who could be help the “bridge” the strong players on both sides. We handed out graphical representations of their scores which did not show specific names, keeping that information confidential unless they wanted to share. Within minutes of the end of our discussion the group had taken the charts and voluntarily identified the names associated with each score on the three scales, and were discussing how they could take advantage of their excellent diversity. Before the day was out they asked us to fly to their midwest headquarters location to repeat our creativity and VIEW presentations and to score every manager on their staff. They saw the insights that they gained as fundamental to new and innovative thinking, helping

them to establish a language and a behavioral understanding of how to leverage their critical human resource assets.

Summary

At IBM we have helped clients, and employees, around the world to appreciate their creative style using the VIEW instrument. We have had very positive results in every country and culture where we have used it. We have validated that VIEW results can help individuals test their reported preferences against their typical behavior in varied situations, in order to affirm or modify an understanding of their strengths or weaknesses in relation to problem solving style. VIEW results can enable individuals to identify ways to be at their personal best, and to determine how they might benefit from the strengths of others. They can learn to use knowledge and awareness of styles to support and personalize their selection and use of creative problem solving methods and tools and to promote effective communication, teamwork, and more insightful results. VIEW also provides a common vocabulary within a group for understanding and appreciating style similarities and differences constructively. It can also be used in guiding groups in strategic planning, innovation, product development, project management, or other deliberate change management initiatives.

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Editor's Note

If you would like to know more about the instrument used to assess creative characteristics in this study (Something About Myself, from The Khatena-Torrance Creative Perception Inventory), visit the Center for Creative Learning website. The “books” at the left side of our home page are buttons you can use to navigate among the other pages; choose the “Assessing Creativity” book. Or, you can simply go directly to: www.creativelearning.com/AssessingCreativity.htm/. This page contains a link to our data base with information about more than 70 instruments that measure various aspects of creativity. You can also print the reports for any of the instruments in the data base.

If you locate other instruments that are not in the data base, or any updates or corrections, we would also appreciate it if you would let us know so that we will be able to maintain the data base's completeness and accuracy.

Implications for CPS Practice Learned From CPS for GEI Focus Groups

By Dr. Eric M. Hampton

Indiana State University

Creative Problem Solving has a wide range of audiences and applications. Thus, it behooves the potential CPS user to gather ideas, experiences, and lessons learned from others using CPS in all its settings. To this end, this article discusses implications for general CPS practice learned from Creative Problem Solving for General Education Intervention Teams (CPS for GEI) settings at Indiana State University.

The implications for practice come from focus group data obtained with school district trainers involved in the implementation of CPS for GEI as part of the Indiana Creative Problem Solving Initiative 2002-2003. The school district trainers had received training from the Blumberg Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Special Education at Indiana State University to become trainers and coaches of CPS for GEI teams within schools. CPS training is offered by the Blumberg Center to professionals in Indiana providing services to children and their families. The Blumberg Center receives support for this training through a grant from the Indiana Department of Education, Division of Exceptional Learners. GEI teams are school-based intervention teams used to assist teachers in need of suggestions and support with academic or behavioral problems. Such teams are often referred to as Student Assistance Teams or Teacher Assistant Teams. Focus group questions gathered information and perceptions on the functioning of the process at the school level, functioning of the CPS for GEI teams, and on the coaching experiences of the district trainers.

Five implications for general CPS practice emerged from qualitative

analysis of the focus group data, and they are discussed briefly.

Implication: Full investment of parties into the process.

Commitment to the CPS process is of great importance in forming an effectively functioning team. District trainers reported on school teams that were functioning effectively and teams which were facing resistance and not living up to the potential of the process. A commonality of effective teams is that they are fully invested in the process. They believe it will work and have purposefully chosen to follow the process to achieve results. When forming CPS teams, then, it is important to involve individuals who believe in the process and are willing to take the time necessary to fully implement and stick with the process. When involvement is mandated rather than initiated and voluntary, team functioning is hampered.

Implication: The practice of CPS takes practice.

Even with fully invested team members, frustration may occur at the outset. This is not surprising. Fully invested team members know the potential of the process. They have an idea of the benefits that can be attained from the generated solutions. Given this, impatience to see the process fully functioning and the team working efficiently is likely. Additionally, it is likely that the process will take more time when teams are newly formed. The implication here is to stick with the process. Do not let investment in the process waiver because of initial frustration. The effectiveness seen from a variety

of settings of the CPS process comes from teams which have also gone through this adjustment phase.

Implication: Good facilitation is a key to the effectiveness of the process.

Part of the adjustment phase with newly formed CPS teams is finding an effective facilitator. It is suggested that the newly formed team spend some initial time defining the qualities that the facilitator should have. This facilitator must be fully invested in the process, committed to making the group work, and have the perseverance to lead the team through the initial adjustment phase. The facilitator must also be willing to take the risk of guiding peers and colleagues through the process. Focus group data indicated that effective facilitators have a number of other qualities. Facilitators must have the respect of their colleagues. They must be assertive and focused. However, this focus must not preclude flexibility on the part of the facilitator. Rather, they must guide the team through the process while being open to change and fully responsive to team members. Finally, facilitators should be comfortable with their role, allowing them to take the risk of peer-guidance and team redirection when necessary. The focus group data are clear on the fact that quality facilitation is a key to team effectiveness.

Implication: Diversity in team membership is important.

While quality facilitation is seen as key, this does not downplay the importance of the team composition. Another key to effective CPS implementation is the forma-

tion of a quality resource group or team. Large diverse teams are viewed as more effective than smaller, less diverse teams. For example, district trainers for CPS for GEI spoke of a link between team diversity and team effectiveness. Teams that incorporated teachers and professionals from many areas and grades were seen as working more effectively than those with a narrower membership. The implication is that a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences, and specialties should be gathered to form the CPS team, allowing for a wider variety of resources and knowledge to be brought into play.

Implication: Come prepared to work and build flexibility into the process.

A pragmatic implication of the focus group data dealt with the importance of preparation on the part of facilitators and team members. Especially in the adjustment phase of using CPS, time can be a factor. To ameliorate this to some extent, the group should be fully prepared to set to work upon arrival, with materials set up in advance and an agenda ready. Flexibility and creativity when forming the team will also help in allowing the group to get down to business. Suggestions include having more than one facilitator available for a team or a backup ready to facilitate team meetings. Additionally, to allow for the formation of a diverse team, the time commitment must be considered. Organizations should strive to find creative means to offset the time commitments invested by team members.

Conclusion

The information gathered from the CPS for GEI district trainer focus groups points clearly to the importance of “buying into” the CPS process, becoming fully invested in seeing it work. With

the buy in, team members will have the fortitude to weather the initial adjustment phase, to clearly define good facilitation for the group and develop this facilitator, and to stick with the process while striving for flexible and creative implementation. Full investment should also bring with it the commitment to gather diverse teams to serve as a rich source of resources. From an organizational standpoint, full investment brings with it ongoing support, aid in implementation, and the flexibility to overcome the time burden invested by individuals. In conclusion, use of the CPS process will result in quality products when factors of group effectiveness, such as quality facilitation and diversity in membership, are addressed by fully invested individuals.

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“There are one-story intellects, two-story intellects, and three-story intellects with skylights. All fact collectors, who have no aim beyond their facts, are one-story men. The two-story men compare, reason, generalize, using the labor of fact collectors as well as their own. Three-story men idealize, imagine, predict; their best illumination comes from above, through the skylight.”

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

Student Action Planning (From Page 12)

5. Focus your attention on what the data tell you about “positive needs,” or the characteristics of a student upon which to build learning opportunities that will lead to growth and creative productivity.
6. Keep the importance of programming at “center stage” throughout your search and from the beginning of your efforts to gather and analyze data, asking, “How will this information help us to plan more effective learning opportunities?”
7. Remain flexible about the process and about your decisions; instructional programming is an ongoing, dynamic process, not a static program or placement decision.
8. Student Action Planning leads to the design of programming that draws on many kinds of services, not simply to an inclusion or exclusion decision regarding a single program placement.
9. Involve students in describing and documenting their own strengths, talents, and sustained interests, and in the process of designing appropriate programming alternatives.
10. Create a specific, written Student Action Plan that you can use to document the services provided for the student and that you can also use to monitor progress and to modify as necessary on an ongoing basis. Involve educators, parents, relevant community resource people, and the student in creating, monitoring, and updating the plan and in documenting results and accomplishments.

Student Action Planning for Talent Development

Some Tips for A New Direction

By Don Treffinger

In our work on the Levels of Service (LoS) approach to talent development programming, two of our major guiding principles have been that programming—providing appropriate, challenging, and developmental learning opportunities—is our central priority and commitment, and that identification procedures and practices must serve the purpose of guiding programming decisions. When we began designing an approach in which programming occupies the primary focus of our efforts, we knew that changes in our thinking about “identification” would also be necessary. It would no longer be possible to approach identification simply in terms of labeling, placement, or inclusion/exclusion of students. Our efforts have led us to a new direction that is consistent with our goals and purposes in LoS, and also provides a new sense of excitement about a process that has long been a source of frustration or consternation for many in gifted education. Many school districts have struggled for years about issues of instrumentation, procedures and requirements, and fairness in assessment. Our new approach can lead to a process approach that is inclusive, data-driven, responsive to a wide range of individual differences, and directed towards meaningful instructional decisions and plans. It can also draw many people into the process of looking at students and their needs constructively, including educators, community resource people, and perhaps most importantly, students themselves.

We refer to this new approach as “Student Action Planning” for talent development; we introduced the concept in *Creative Learning Today* in Volume 11, Number 1 (January-March, 2002), and we have continued to work on the development of new resources since then. Two new publications will be available in July, about which we will provide additional information in the next issue of *Creative Learning Today*. The resources we have been developing were previewed initially in our Indiana LoS Pilot Project in January, and will be incorporated in the materials that will be offered in our LoS Summer Professional Development Institute in Sarasota (July 7-10, 2004; see our website for additional information). To offer you a sense of some of the key issues and themes that we address in Student Action Planning, here are ten tips for effective Student Action Planning for talent development:

1. Always be on the lookout for students’ strengths, talents, and sustained interests. Spotting talent requires that we always keep our eyes open!
2. Use many sources of data to discover and verify students’ strengths, talents, and sustained interests. One powerful piece of data may confirm a strength, but no single piece of data is sufficient to conclude that strengths and needs are absent.
3. Test scores are only one piece of data, and should not be an overarching or overriding factor in themselves (either positively or negatively).
4. Use Creative Problem Solving tools to guide planning and to build effective responses to students’ needs.

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.

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