



## First VIEW Users' Networking Conference Held in Sarasota

From January 5-7, 2006, the first Networking Conference for VIEW Users at the Holiday Inn on Lido Beach in Sarasota. The group (see photo at right) included experienced VIEW users, researchers, and trainers from several parts of the United States and from five other countries—a highly-engaged and truly international group. The group also represented interests and experiences in VIEW applications in business and training, teacher education, educational and cognitive psychology, classroom instructional settings, and two major international educational programs (Destination ImagiNation, Inc., and the Future Problem Solving program).

The participants shared ideas and successful practices, engaged in discussions with all three VIEW co-authors, and learned about a variety of new and recently-completed research and development initiatives. Research in progress focuses on the effects of style awareness on multiple measures of problem solving performance, relationships between style and teamwork skills, links between style and climate for creativity, workplace differences in style, and style differences among music professionals in various specializations, among others.



The group also learned more about current translations of VIEW into several languages and new translations currently in progress. Participants and the VIEW authorship team also worked collaboratively to identify new training exercises and activities and to create prototypes of new resources for a variety of applications and settings..

VIEW is now being used with adolescents and adults in more than a dozen countries. If you are currently a VIEW user, or plan to become involved in the coming year, plan now to join us for the Second Networking Conference, which will be held January 3-5, 2007.

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## 2005 NAGC Conference: Indiana Team Shares LoS Experience and Expertise

The Indiana Department of Education –Center for Creative Learning *Levels of Service Project*, now in its third year of operation, made its presence known at the 2005 NAGC Conference in Louisville, Kentucky in November. This year, the project emphasizes two main priorities: evaluating and documenting the effectiveness and impact of the LoS approach in the school setting, and developing several model or demonstration sites where other educators can visit to observe “LoS programming in action.”

The team from Churubusco Elementary School, consisting of the Principal, Kevin Kempton, and two LoS teachers, Julie Leedy, and Robin Peterman, presented a colorful and informative session on “LoS: S.O.S. for all students,” emphasizing their efforts to provide appropriate and challenging opportunities for all students while ensuring a high level of challenge for students with strengths and talents in a variety of areas. The team members shared their expertise and practical experience with an estimated 75 or more conference participants. Their engaging display featured a nautical “life preserver” theme— highlighting visually the powerful ways that LoS programming has enhanced and expanded talent development, motivation, and



challenge for their students and providing opportunities to engage staff, parents, and community members in new ways as well. In addition to several informative handouts, the team’s display included a diagram of the four Levels of Service and illustrating the variety of problem solving challenges and “enrichment clubs” the school has created. The team also illustrated their unique “Talent Fair” offerings in a variety of areas including music, dance, art, science, technology, and young writers.



Meeting individually or in small groups with conference participants who attended the “marketplace” session, the team members shared information about their talent spotting efforts, the role of LoS specialists, classroom teachers, and community resources in their program, and the variety of “learning labs” and self-directed projects they have carried out with their students. For more information, contact the team at Churubusco Elementary School, 3 Eagle Drive, Churubusco, IN 46723, or contact the Center for Creative Learning to obtain specific contact information for the team or additional information about the Indiana LoS project.

# Differentiated Programming: The Role of Style

By Don Treffinger

Differentiating instruction is an essential component of effective programming for giftedness and talent development. In the last issue of *Creative Learning Today* (Vol. 14, #1), we discussed differentiation in relation to the Levels of Service (LoS) approach to talent development. In this article, we'll look more closely at the role of style as one of four factors that have an important role in differentiating effectively.

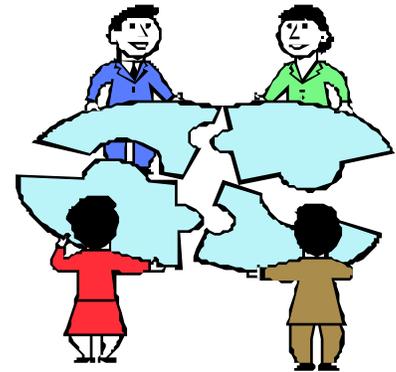
It is important to understand differentiation as a *process* of recognizing and responding to differences and the uniqueness of learners, rather than as a single kind of curriculum or instructional activity. It is a lingering concern that, even today, with so many excellent resources available on differentiation (by Carol Tomlinson and others), it is still rather common to hear gifted education specialists or advocates refer to "the differentiated curriculum."

The phrase is not only a concern, but it is genuinely puzzling. Advocates of gifted education usually argue (and correctly so) that a major challenge for high-ability students in regular classrooms is suffering from the boredom that arises from their being forced into an unchallenging, inappropriate lockstep curriculum. When there is a "one-size-fits-all" curriculum, the advocates argue, it is likely that it really fits no one, much to the disservice of students who could benefit from much richer and deeper experiences. In those circumstances, the argument goes, students who already know the material to be covered, or who can learn it quickly and easily, are just asked to do "more of the same," which only worsens boredom and disengagement from the learning experience.

The troubling paradox is that, if we accept the advocate's argument (and I do), but then propose that the alternative is a specific, fixed "differentiated curriculum for the gifted," we are simply recreating the same problem that led us initially to be concerned. We have not resolved the concern of "the same thing for everyone," but instead have merely substituted a *different* "same thing." A single, fixed "gifted curriculum" is no more appropriate for all high-ability students than a fixed regular curriculum is appropriate for every student.

To resolve this dilemma, some fundamental shifts in thinking seem necessary. First, we need to move away from relying on a view that gifted education is about *having a program*, and toward an understanding of gifted *programming* (or programming for talent development). Second, we need to move away from thinking of curriculum as outside of, or separate from, the student, and emphasize research-based knowledge on how person, process, content, and context all interact to lead to effective, personalized instruction. Third, we must move beyond a view of "the gifted child" as a category of students who are presumed to be uniform or identical in most (if not all) important characteristics, and embrace an understanding that gifts and talents are expressed in many different ways from one person to another. None of these shifts is a new idea—we have known about the many and varied aspects of intelligence or talent for five decades or longer, for example—but they are ideas that are being implemented with widely varying effectiveness across districts, schools, or even from one classroom to another in a school. Bringing our beliefs and

knowledge about giftedness, talents, and programming possibilities, and bringing them into congruence with our practice, are essential steps in creating a foundation for differentiation and for powerful learning experiences for students.



## Four Factors Influencing Differentiation

To meet the challenge of differentiating instruction effectively, we might consider four important factors: person, process, content, and context. These are illustrated in the accompanying figure (on the next page).

The literature of gifted education contains many descriptions of cognitive abilities and personality characteristics commonly associated with giftedness, and with the nature of rigorous and challenging content. Therefore, we will not address those factors in this article. Instead, we'll focus on the important role of style. (In the next issue, we'll take a closer look at the "context" factor.)

## How Style Contributes to Differentiation

Considering individual style preferences in relation to differentiation helps us to move beyond

*Continued on p.4*

## Differentiation and Style

*Continued from Page 3*

what we might call *the checklist mindset* (“Does the student display these characteristics or not? How many of them?”) and, instead, to investigate the implications of the student’s characteristics for teaching, learning, and talent development. Theory and research on learning style and problem-solving style has contributed to our understanding of people, as well as to our approach to differentiation.

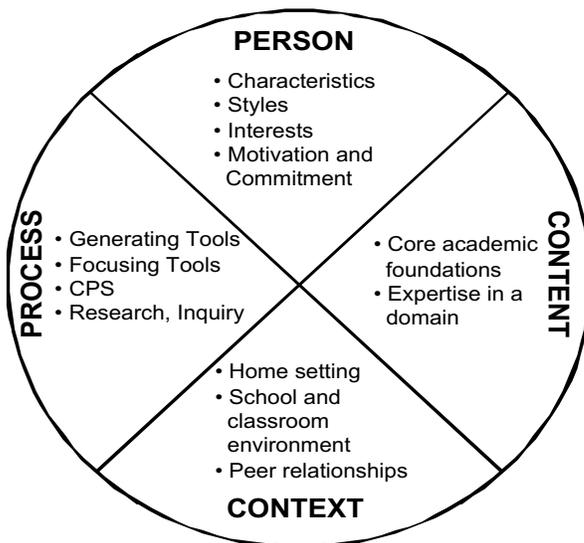
Initially, we realized that one’s learning style preferences were important to take into account in “knowing the student.” Knowledge of style preferences gives us important insights into the unique ways each student learns best, deals with complex challenges, and manages change. In addition, however, we also learned that there is no single profile of style preferences that characterizes gifted or creative people, but that each person’s strengths and talents are expressed, personalized, or given richness and texture, through his or her style. We learned to change the question from “How creative are you?” to “How are you creative?”.

The work of Drs. Rita and Ken Dunn provides a practical and well-researched approach to learning styles in the classroom. They view learning style as the ways individuals concentrate on, process, remember, and use new and difficult information. Their model includes 21 style elements, divided into five categories (environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychological). Research indicates that a number of these elements differentiate high-ability students from other age peers. Visit the website of the International Learning Styles Network to learn more; it is: <http://www.learningstyles.net/>). Click on the button, “D&D Model” to see the full model. There is also a research bibliography and a resource catalog. Two of the available publications that address high-ability students are *Synthesis of the Dunn and Dunn Learning-Style Model Research*, (2003) edited by Rita Dunn and Shirley Griggs, and the 1992 book by Rita and Ken Dunn and Don Treffinger, *Bringing Out the Giftedness in Your Child*.

Style preferences have also been very important in our recent work on Creative Problem Solving (CPS). Knowledge of style helps individuals and groups personalize or customize their learning and application of CPS. What does that mean?

For many years, CPS was viewed as a set of steps or stages to be learned and applied in a fixed, linear, sequential manner. People talked about “doing a run through” of the process, and teachers reported that they “covered” CPS in their program. Today we know that everyone does not learn or use CPS in a rigid, linear way. We use style information to link person and process, and to ensure that CPS is a natural, flexible, and dynamic process. Style preferences influence how people learn and apply CPS, individually or in a group. Their style preferences influence how they make CPS a personal process, rather than just “doing it the way they are told to do it.”

For example, we can now define and assess problem-solving styles (consistent individual differences in the way people manage change and solve problems). Our work on problem-solving style involves three dimensions, with two styles in each: *Orientation to Change* (with the Explorer and Developer styles); *Manner of Processing* (External and Internal styles); and *Ways of Deciding* (Person and Task styles). Consider learning a new tool for generating ideas (let’s say, SCAMPER, or a Morphological Matrix). People who prefer the Explorer style tend to pick up new tools quickly and enthusiastically, not to spend much time with step-by-step directions for the tool, and start “playing with” the tool quickly, looking for ways to modify and apply it. By contrast, those with a Developer style tend to pay close attention to the directions; they want to be certain



that they understand how to use the tool correctly, and they want to be very clear about when to use the tool and what kind of results to expect. Have you heard people say that “creativity is thinking out of the box”? That’s great— for Explorers. Developers would tell us that their creativity involves “thinking better within the box” (rearranging or redecorating it, making it a better box)!

Or, think about the way people often use Brainstorming: they give a group an open-ended question the participants haven’t seen before, ask them to generate lots of ideas right away, and to do it aloud in the group. That might work fine for people with an External Manner of Processing Style, but not serve those with an Internal style very well at all.

Learning and applying CPS effectively, and differentiating

process instruction appropriately, is much more than mechanically “running through” a fixed set of steps in a prescribed way. To learn more about our assessment of problem-solving style, and to find a number of downloadable resources, visit the Problem Solving Style page at our website (<http://www.creativelearning.com/Problemsolving.htm>).

At the present time, we have valid and reliable tools for assessing these problem-solving style dimensions for adolescents and adults (ages 12+), but not for younger children. We believe that style preferences emerge reasonably early in life, and many teachers report that they see differences among their students in the three dimensions that VIEW assesses. However, we are not yet certain whether children below age 12 have sufficient life

experience and reflective insight into their preferences to enable them to describe their style accurately and consistently in a self-report measure. That remains an important, but open, question. We are working on the design and development of a scale that might be used by teachers or parents to record their observations and impressions of a child’s style preferences. If you would be interested in participating in the preliminary field-testing when the forms are ready, please contact Don Treffinger ([don@creativelearning.com](mailto:don@creativelearning.com)) or Ed Selby ([ecselby@earthlink.net](mailto:ecselby@earthlink.net)).

*Editor’s Note.* We have added many new readers since our last issue. If you would like to receive a copy of Volume 14, # 1, with the first article in this series, send Dr. Treffinger an email request, and we will send you the PDF file.

## Center Team Members Represented at World Conference

Don Treffinger, Ed Selby, Pat Schoonover, Carol Wittig, and Judi Treffinger represented the Center at the 2005 Conference of the World Council on Gifted and Talented Children, in New Orleans in August (just two weeks before the devastation of Hurricane Katrina).

We presented several sessions on the LoS approach to talent development, an overview of CPS tools, components, and stages, and an introduction to problem-solving style. Don Treffinger also participated in a pre-conference panel on creativity research, and was presented the organization’s 2005 *International Creativity Award* at the Conference’s closing session.

We were pleased to be able to share the conference with many colleagues from the U. S. and Canada, and to meet new colleagues from all over the world.



*Ed Selby, Don Treffinger, and Carol Wittig stopped to “talk shop” with Dr. Mike Pyryt of the University of Calgary (2nd from left) during an early evening stroll along the riverfront in New Orleans.*

# Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction

(New! 4th Edition)

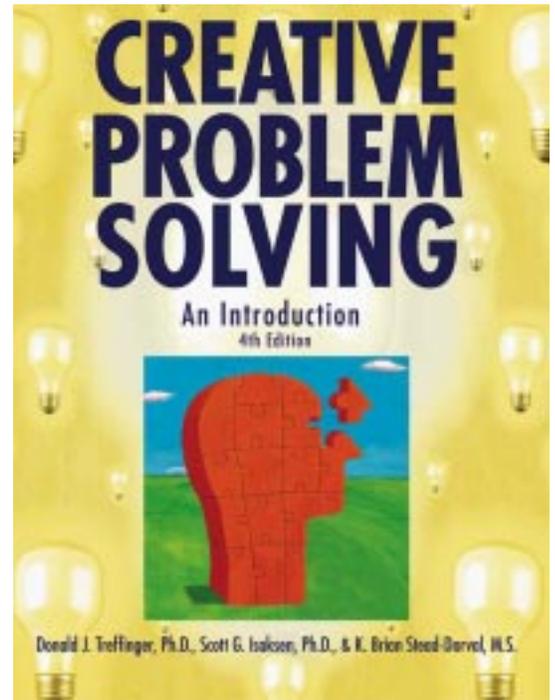
By Donald J. Treffinger, Scott G. Isaksen, and  
K. Brian Dorval

This definitive guide shows you how to apply both creative and critical thinking to find successful solutions to everyday problems. Creative Problem Solving (CPS) can help you to approach problems and deal with change in a deliberative and constructive way, and consequently build your confidence and success in working with complex challenges.

Written for both group leaders and individuals seeking a systematic way to build innovative and effective solutions, *Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction* is perfect for educational, business, and community groups. This best-selling introduction offers a concise, practical guide to the CPS process. **This revised and updated fourth edition includes ...**

- easy-to-follow instructions for using Creative Problem Solving
- practical tools for understanding the challenge, generating ideas, and preparing for action
- expanded guidelines for planning your approach to CPS
- strategies that ensure successful group dynamics
- the latest trends in creative thinking and group problem solving
- practical suggestions for those new to Creative Problem Solving
- guidelines for group facilitators.

Used by thousands of group leaders seeking a friendly introduction to using CPS, this book is a time-honored classic. Creative Problem Solving is based on more than five decades of extensive research, development, and field experience in educational settings, businesses, and many other organizations. If you're new to Creative Problem Solving, use this book for a concise but complete introduction to the basics of Creative Problem Solving. If you're an experienced Creative Problem Solver, use this book as an update of the recent advances in CPS that make the process even more natural, flexible, and "user-friendly" than ever before! *Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction* is also an excellent choice for use as a participant's textbook in introductory workshops, courses, training programs, or seminars. The regular price of the book is **\$24.95**.

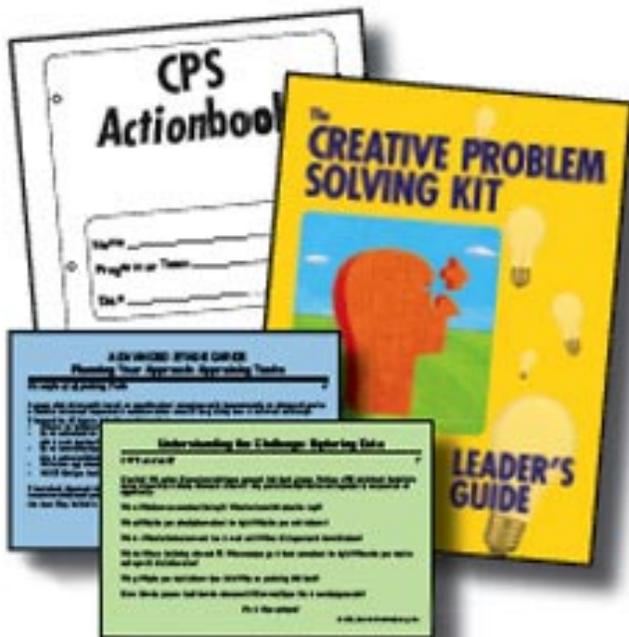


## Additional CPS Support Resources Available

We also offer a variety of other resources to help you apply CPS Version 6.1™ in many settings. These include practical resources to teach the basic tools for generating and focusing options, templates or "graphic organizers" for CPS (in the Creative Problem Solver's Guidebook, for example), and resources for assessment (in *Assessing CPS Performance*, for example). To learn more about these and other CPS resources, please visit our website: [www.creativelearning.com](http://www.creativelearning.com). You can also download a free full-color PDF overview of CPS Version 6.1™ and a number of other resources in PDF format.

## Special Introductory Offer for CLT Readers!

For a limited time, we will offer Creative Learning Today readers a special introductory offer for a combined set of Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction and the CPS Kit. The combined prices of these two new resources is regularly \$104.95, plus shipping and handling. If you place your order by February 28, 2006, you may obtain the set for \$100.00 including standard shipping to the U. S. or Canada. (For international orders, we will credit you for \$5.00 towards the actual shipping costs.) Your savings are more than 15%. Orders for this special offer must be prepaid (in U. S. funds) by check or credit card (Master Card, VISA, or American Express).



## The Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Kit

*A Practical Tool for Learning and Applying CPS*

By Donald J. Treffinger, Carole A. Nassab, Patricia F. Schoonover, Edwin C. Selby, Cindy Shepardson, Carol V. Wittig, and Grover Young.

This innovative kit offers an in-depth, hands-on approach to guide individuals and groups in learning and applying CPS. If you are new to CPS, the kit provides a practical, systematic way to learn the process and put it to use immediately. Experienced CPS users will find the kit helpful in organizing and managing process applications.

Including a Leader's Guide informational book, a 51-page reproducible *Actionbook*, and individual, color-coded cards detailing the CPS components, stages, and tools, *The CPS Kit* will easily become an integral part of your CPS endeavors.

Group and classroom leaders can use the simple, concise and informative Leader's Guide to build on their knowledge of the process and conduct successful CPS training. The *Actionbook* workbook allows students to document their work and provides worksheets and templates to guide their thinking process. And, each component and individual stage of CPS has its own set of color-coded cards, including separate Generating and Focusing Tools cards, to bring a hands-on approach to learning CPS.

This flexible problem-solving program is designed for anyone learning or practicing CPS. Discover the enthusiasm among your students and colleagues as they watch their problems and concerns become real, viable solutions and creative actions with the help of *The CPS Kit*! The regular price for the **Complete kit is \$79.95.**

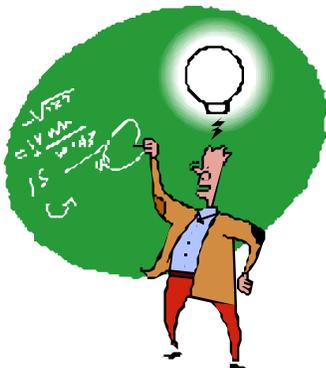
## NCTT Announces New Seminars in February, 2006

The National Center for Teaching Thinking in Newton, Massachusetts, directed by Dr. Robert Swartz, will offer its *Two Week February Seminar* again in 2006! The seminar will take place from February 13 – 24, 2006 at NCTT's home office.

The overall goal of the seminars is to review progress that has been made in curriculum efforts that integrate instruction in critical and creative thinking and progress in assessment techniques for determining the quality of student thinking, and then to develop a "best practices" consensus on these two aspects of thinking-based learning for use in schools, school districts, and departments or ministries of education.

Participants may attend one of the two weeks or the full two week program; the weekly schedule includes Developing a Thinking-Based Curriculum (February 13-17) and Assessing Students' Critical Thinking Abilities (February 20-24); sessions run from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM daily.

For more details, please see the NCTT website, [www.nctt.net](http://www.nctt.net), or write to the National Center for Teaching Thinking, P.O. Box 590607, Newton Centre, MA 02459.



## Technology Skills for Educators

A recent web article (<http://thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A5387.cfm>) by Laura Turner, noted that it can be difficult for educators "to catch up, keep up, and put up" with fast-moving technology. As educators strive for excellence and to maintain or enhance their technology experience and skills, the author identified 20 technology skills that every educator should have.



The skills identified by the author included knowledge or skill in the following areas:

1. Word Processing
2. Spreadsheets
3. Databases
4. Electronic Presentations
5. Web Navigation
6. Web Site Design
7. E-Mail Management
8. Digital Cameras
9. Computer Networks (Specific to your setting)
10. File Management
11. Downloading Software From the Web (including eBooks)
12. Installing Computer Software onto a Computer System
13. WebCT or Blackboard Teaching
14. Videoconferencing
15. Computer-Related Storage Devices (e.g., disks, CDs, USB drives, ZIP disks, DVDs)
16. Scanners
17. PDAs
18. Deep Web Knowledge
19. Educational Copyrights
20. Computer Security

It's challenging to do a "self-check" on these skills. Your editor, for example, felt confident in eight of the 20 areas, proficient in five, limited in four, and absolutely clueless about three (what in the world is "deep web knowledge," anyway?). How do you fare? It might even be a greater challenge to ask about how your expertise might compare to that of your students in these skills. Perhaps it's too uncomfortable to go there!

Let's pose a few additional challenges, however. How might any of these skills be useful in fostering creative learning or in learning and applying CPS? What connections might there be for students (in any talent area, not just for students with strengths and talents in the technology itself) in relation to nurturing talent or expertise? And, from a research perspective, what relationships might we identify between technological skills and style preferences? We invite your ideas and suggestions, examples or cases of successful "creative connections," or research findings to share in future issues of CLT.

# Creative Problem Solving in Education (CPSE): A Distance Learning Opportunity

Creativity and Creative Problem Solving (CPS) are central goals of many innovative programs. Not only are these skills essential for students—but life in today's world challenges you to be a creative thinker and problem solver, too! Of course, we understand that you have many "real life" demands on your time and energy. The time required to travel and attend training programs can be very limited—but you're eager to help your team to be at its creative best. As we noted in the last issue of CLT, the Center for Creative Learning has developed a practical solution for this challenge! You can now use the Internet as a learning tool and participate together in CPSE—a new Distance Learning Module on CPS that has been designed to help you expand, extend, and enhance your skills in creative thinking, critical thinking, and CPS.

This interactive, web-based module allows adults to learn, practice, and apply the basic concepts and tools of CPS any time, and at your own rate and pace. You will only need a pass-



word, a computer, and Internet access.

This comprehensive course includes: Understanding the nature and definition of Creativity and CPS; Personal Creativity Characteristics and Problem-Solving Styles; Creative Outcomes or Products; The Context or Environment for Creativity; Guidelines for Generating and Focusing; Tools for Generating and Focusing Options; and the Components and Stages of CPS Version 6.1™— a contemporary approach to solving problems and managing change.

Each participant in this course will also work closely with an individually assigned Mentor, who will review and discuss your work with you by email. Your Mentor will guide you in applying CPS successfully in one of five "application strands" (Using CPS in the Classroom; Applying CPS in Education with Adults; the Future Problem Solving Program; FPSP's Community Problem Solving [CmPS]; Destination ImagiNation®). Individuals can now register for this course; discounts are available for site licenses for multiple participants. Upon completion of the course, you will receive a certificate and a letter documenting the course content and verifying your work; graduate credit can be arranged at an additional cost. A portion of the proceeds from all registrations for the CPSE course will go to both the Future Problem Solving and Destination ImagiNation® programs. You may see a free sample of the course at: [www.creativelearning.com/cpsdemo](http://www.creativelearning.com/cpsdemo). To learn more about this exciting new opportunity, please contact Dr. Treffinger at [don@creativelearning.com](mailto:don@creativelearning.com).

## Creativity Test Scores Add Significantly to Predictions of Various Kinds of Achievements

Creativity tests make contributions that are important and significant, beyond the predictive value of intelligence measures, reported Dr. Kyung-Hee Kim, of Eastern Michigan University, in a research presentation at the 2005 NAGC Conference.

Dr. Kim reported that, for predictions of a variety of creative achievements, creativity tests were better predictors than intelligence tests. In addition, his

data indicated that the *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking* predicted those achievements significantly better than several other tests of creativity.

The meta-analysis of published studies also indicated that creativity test scores predicted quality of creative products significantly better than other types of creative achievement (such as quantity of creative achievements, creative writing, or artistic products.)

For more information, contact Dr. Kim at [kkim7@emich.edu](mailto:kkim7@emich.edu), or by mail at Department of Teacher Education, Eastern Michigan University, 313K Porter Building, Ypsilanti, MI 48197.

You can also obtain additional information about more than 70 tests of creativity by visiting the "Assessing Creativity" page at the Center for Creative Learning website.

# Plan Now for Summer 2006: Two Professional Development Institutes

The Center for Creative Learning will offer two 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.

## Registration Information

The number of places is limited in both Institutes, so we recommend early registration. Late enrollments will be accepted subject to space availability. To register, send each participant's name, mailing address, email address, and program choice (July 6-8, July 10-12, or both), with payment, to the Center for Creative Learning. (A PDF file of this information is also available at the "Workshops and Services" page on our website, [www.creativelearning.com](http://www.creativelearning.com).)

The Institutes will be held at a hotel in Sarasota; special room rates for Institute participants will be available. The cost for one person for one Institute is \$450.00 (US). Group discounts are available; see the website for more information about costs and terms of payment. (We accept school or state purchase orders, checks, MasterCard, VISA, and American Express.) The registration fee for either Institute includes: program fees, course textbooks and hand-out materials, three continental breakfasts, refreshments at daily breaks, two luncheons, and follow-up with the Institute Staff (two phone or email consultations per participant).

## ***Institute on Talent Development: The Levels of Service Approach (July 6-8, 2006)***

This program will begin at **9:00 AM. on Thursday, July 6**, and conclude at **Noon on Saturday, July 8**. The Institute will provide an in-depth presentation of the Levels of Service (LoS) approach to talent development. As a participant in the program, you will learn:

- The implications of contemporary views of talent, and talent development for educational programming.
- The four Levels of Service and how to identify practical activities for each level.
- A systematic planning model for implementing the LoS approach (when designing new programs or updating existing G/T programs).
- Strategies, tools, and resources for gaining involvement and support at the school, district, or state levels.
- Specific strategies, tools, and resources to link LoS programming with other school priorities and initiatives.
- Tools and resources for professional development, parent and community awareness, and effective evaluation.

This Institute will provide you with training and practical guidance for program design, implementation, and evaluation. You will receive a copy of: our textbook, *Talent Development: The Levels of Service Approach*; our *LoS Planning Handbook* (with an accompanying CD of resources); and selected assessment and evaluation resources. You will also receive follow-up coaching and support for LoS implementation (two phone or email consultations with an Institute staff member for each participant). The Institute will provide you with the information, skills, tools, and resources you need to implement the LoS approach in a school, a school district, or on a regional or statewide basis.

Both of these Institutes are open to individual participants. However, we strongly recommend that you enroll a team of 3-5 people from your organization (e.g., a planning team, task force, or program management team). A team, including participants with both administrative and instructional responsibilities, often provides a broad base for powerful, effective implementation and follow-up when you return home.

## Institute on Creative Problem Solving (CPS) in Education (July 10-12, 2006)

The Institute will begin at **9:00 AM. on Monday, July 10**, and close at **Noon. on Wednesday, July 12**.

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, including:

- To guide planning for student success and positive gains in achievement.
- To support leadership and teamwork in projects (for both adults and students).
- To enhance curriculum development and empower individuals and teams to deal with real-life problems and challenges.
- To expand and enhance life skills and career planning and counseling activities.
- To provide tools that link creative and critical thinking with academic content standards.
- To support and empower school advisory teams, site-based management, and school improvement or strategic planning efforts.
- To guide teams or groups in planning new programs or revising existing programs in any area.

This Institute will provide you with training and hands-on practice on *Understanding the Challenge, Generating Ideas, Preparing for Action, and Planning Your Approach*— with a variety of specific tools for generating options, focusing your thinking, and planning for successful implementation of new ideas. You will also receive follow-up coaching and support for CPS implementation (two phone or email consultations with an Institute staff member for each participant). You will return home with a wide variety of skills and tools that you can use on your own, when you are working with students of all ages in a classroom or training setting, or when you are working with other adults to solve problems, plan new projects or programs, or manage change. You will receive an extensive set of supporting materials and handouts, books, and CD-based reproducible resources, to enable you to incorporate CPS in any educational setting. You will also receive an assessment of your personal problem solving style preferences.



*This is a sunset as viewed just steps from the front door of the hotel at which we hold our Professional Development Institutes— just another reason to join us in lovely Sarasota!*

## Custom Institutes At Your Site Are Also Available

The Center for Creative Learning can work with clients to offer either or both of our two Summer Professional Development Institutes at your site. We can work with schools, school districts, regional agencies, state education agencies, colleges and universities, or professional organizations to build a program tailored your group's needs and interests.

We can also help you to design and carry out a "training the trainers" program, in which you send a team to our Summer programs in Sarasota, and then we provide additional training to enable them to serve as small group facilitators with our team's guidance as we plan and carry out an Institute for a new group at your site. This can help you to build the capacity within your own area to provide high-quality training and in-depth support for LoS and/or for CPS applications.

We can also work with you to provide additional support services, including curriculum development, a "consultant in residence" to work on-site with your staff in their own setting during the school year, and advanced leadership training for CPS facilitators. Our training agreements can also provide teaching resources (such as the CPS Kit on page 7 of this issue, or the CPSE Distance Learning course on page 9) to enhance and support implementation.

Customized contracts can also include plans and resources for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of CPS training and applications in your setting, with a focus on improving student performance.

## CPS: Master Teaching Tips

# Be Certain to Invest Effort in Framing Problems Effectively

The importance of finding and defining a problem is widely known and accepted. Although some approaches separate “finding problems” from “solving problems,” we work with them in a more integrative or holistic way. We ask how any components or stages you choose and use help you to accomplish your goals as problem solvers. Framing Problems is one stage in the Understanding the Challenge component of CPS. Your problem statement will have a major impact on your effectiveness or success of any your subsequent efforts to find creative solutions or to transform new ideas into successful actions. The expert Creative Problem Solver, therefore, must be very skillful in framing problem statements that have what we call *idea generating potential*.

Excellent problem statements are exciting, energizing ways to stimulate a broad and varied search for options— starting points for generating many ideas, varied perspectives and insights, and novel or original possibilities. Too often, inexperienced problem solvers say, “the problem is...” and follow that with a negative, discouraging statement (such as, “the problem is that we don’t have enough time,” or “the problem is that we don’t have enough money to do this”) or the even more discouraging, “we can’t because...”. The skillful Creative Problem Solver invests time and effort in working on the four elements of a problem statement that will have idea generating potential; these are:

- **An invitational stem** that points the problem in the direction of searching for ideas. The three most common invitational stems we use are: IWWM (“In What Ways Might...”), HM (“How Might...”) or H2 (“How to...”).
- **A clear statement of ownership.** We’re clear about stating who owns the problem, or who has responsibility for taking action. This might be “I,” “We,” or the name of a person or group (e.g., “In what ways might our team...”).
- **A constructive action verb.** Use verbs that are constructive and will stimulate the search for specific ideas that will help you “move forward” from where you are when you start to where you want to be in the future. Constructive action verbs include *increase, expand, encourage, stimulate, promote, or nurture* (but there are also many others).
- **A concise goal or objective.** Complete the problem statement with a concise word or phrase that expresses the central goal or objective (e.g., “IWWM we increase *parent support for talent development programming?*” or, “H2 encourage my students to *maintain high standards for quality work?*”). Note that we don’t include criteria or restrictions in the problem statement that might unduly limit or restrict the search for ideas.

Invest your time and effort in using these four elements to generate a variety of possible problem statements before you focus your thinking by constructing or choosing one that you want to use to generate ideas. That investment will pay dividends of more and better solutions.

## Purpose of CLT

**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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### VIEW Inventory: Advanced Training Program

If you are interested in becoming qualified to use *VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style*, our next Advanced Training Programs in Sarasota for new VIEW users will be:

- April 27-28, 2006
- September 21-22, 2006

Visit the problem-solving style page of the Center’s website, or the new VIEW website ([www.ViewStyle.net](http://www.ViewStyle.net)) for more information.

VIEW Users: the 2007 Second VIEW Users Networking Conference will be January 3-5, 2007 in Sarasota. Contact the Center for details.