



A New Renaissance?

Preparing Productive Thinkers for Tomorrow's World

Editorial By Dr. Don Treffinger

It is hardly news that change is a reality for people of all ages today, at home, at school, or in the workplace, and that it is important to think in new ways about "basic skills." Consider, for example, this list of the "basics of tomorrow":

- Evaluation and analysis skills
- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving strategies...
- Organization and reference skills
- Synthesis
- Application
- Creativity
- Decision-making, given incomplete information
- Communication skills, through a variety of modes.

The "news," however, is that this list is actually taken from a document published a quarter of a century ago (Gisi & Forbes, 1982, p. 6). More recently, of course, the study of "workplace basics" (Carnevale, Gaines, & Meltzer, 1988) and the SCANS report (United States Department of Labor, 1991) provided similar lists. And, even more recently, the National Center on Education and the Economy highlighted the importance of innovation and creativity for education (e.g., Adams, 2005), and Thomas Friedman (2006) warned us that "the world is flat." If you have even the slightest inclination to doubt that, to be uncertain whether we live in a world

of constant, accelerating change, or whether students need to learn to be creative thinkers and problem solvers, just think about the everyday life experiences of millions of children and teenagers today.

- They can view live images from every corner of the world, from their classroom or even in their home, and talk with or exchange video images with other young people many time zones away.
- They have more technology in classrooms (and in many cases, in their home, or even in their back pack!) than existed in the workplaces of their grandparents, or perhaps even for their parents at the beginning of their careers.
- In the course of their education, they will study subjects that were unknown when their teachers and parents were students, and may well find themselves embarking on careers that do not yet exist today.
- While the majority of their parents went to school and grew up in the company of other people who were similar to them in most respects, today's young people routinely experience great diversity of people, backgrounds,

and experiences. They will grow up to compete, not only with other students in their school, neighborhood, or community— but on a global basis.

Once upon a time, educators might have said to their students, "If you will simply pay close attention to what I am going to teach you, you will learn everything you will need to know for a successful life." Alas, stories that begin, "Once upon a time..." are fairy tales. It's doubtful that such a message was ever true, but we can be certain that it is not

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Applying CPS Tools in Education: Thinking in Action

In the previous issue of *Creative Learning Today* (Volume 15, Number 3), we shared five examples of applications of CPS generating and focusing tools with students. In this article, our attention will shift to applications of those CPS tools in professional development settings. These examples include an undergraduate teacher education course and two applications in coaching and mentoring for professional development from another setting. They illustrate several ways that CPS tools can be used effectively with adult learners in an educational setting.

Applying Tools in Undergraduate Education

By Tasha Almond-Reiser, M.S. Ed., doctoral student, and graduate teaching assistant at The University of South Dakota and Timothy J. Duggan, Ed.D, assistant professor, The University of South Dakota.

This example illustrates how the *Brainstorming* generating tool and the *Sequencing (S-M-L)* focusing tool were recently applied in an interdisciplinary Ecology of Human Development course that includes a course-embedded service learning project. The participants in the course were Junior and Senior undergraduate students at the University of South Dakota. The activities address the following content standard from the University's IdEA (Interdisciplinary Education and Action) Program:

- Students will gain concrete experience in problem-solving and addressing contemporary issues through hands-on service, research, having diverse viewpoints and academic backgrounds.
- Students will actively participate in an array of service and/or co-curricular activities and events, integrating their experiences into their education.

The activities were part of a course-embedded service project the students must complete as a course requirement. They will be working at an after-school Head Start program at a local elementary school, planning activities and helping the staff to create stimulating environments for the children. They will spend approximately 15 hours with the children. The *Brainstorming* generating tool was used first as a way for students to generate ideas and possibilities for what they might do with the children in the program. They self-selected into groups of two or three based on common interests and schedules. The instructor briefly introduced what they would be doing with the tool, gave them large easel paper and markers, and asked them to generate a few ideas and then to think of extensions for some of the activities. The groups spent approximately 20 minutes generating ideas. Examples of some of the activities generated by the students included:

- Making cookies, with possible learning outcomes including learning about measuring, learning about chemistry behind how ingredients are combined, using fine motor skills.
- Teaching Spanish to children through interactive activities
- Counting activities with money, such as adding, subtracting, purchasing, etc.
- Learning about music and creating their own musical instruments out of found objects, taking a field trip to music museum, listening to different types of music.
- Engaging in scavenger hunts
- Making puzzles
- Making their own books out of pictures they take
- Producing a play, making puppets
- Touring local businesses
- Holding "Olympics"
- Learning a foreign language (e.g., Spanish themed week, with events and activi-





- Learning how to play disc golf
- Teaching about nutrition and health
- Making ice cream and Playdoh® with various learning outcomes associated to science, math, or cooking,

Next, the groups devoted approximately 20 minutes to using the *Sequencing S-M-L* focusing tool to guide their planning for one of the activities they had started to develop. This tool required more direction, so the instructor posted a chart listing the steps for the tool, provided the directions for them to refer to, and drew an example of how a completed easel paper might look upon completing their work with the tool. The class worked together on one example. As part of the activity, students decided to do research

about the developmental age of the children they will be working with, and they were asked to think about long-term learning outcomes. The students will write a formal reflection at the culmination of their service work that addresses their achievement of the goals.

Using the *Brainstorming* and *Sequencing S-M-L* tools helped students to generate ideas, and to stretch their current notions of what they can do with Head Start children. The tools also helped them to think about what they will need to do to implement their service-learning project, and to think about the developmental appropriateness of their activities as reflected in their intended learning outcomes. Furthermore, students identified areas for further investigation prior to working with the children. Another important outcome of this activity was the camaraderie it helped to establish among our students. They are developing reciprocity within groups and as a class. They were compelled to work together and seek help from each other *before* asking the instructor questions. They learned to look for answers to their questions systematically. From these activities the students developed ideas and plans for what they will do when they go to the school to work with the children. They have concrete plans and questions for the after-school program coordinator.

These tools were not only helpful for generating ideas and plans, but they also served as a way for the instructor to gain the students' trust, which lessens the anxiety they have toward planning their service and toward thinking creatively. One class goal for the semester is to think more creatively about course content, service, and interdisciplinary topics. The students were uncomfortable at first, and hesitant to delve into working together. Some sat quietly and did not use the paper or markers provided, while the more talkative, groups began right away writing ideas. Once the quiet groups saw others engaging in the activities, they began to work as well. Initially, some students made comments that they could not think of anything and gave reasons for why they couldn't. The instructor encouraged them to put ideas down, regardless of what they thought of the idea. Through working

together they established a learning community, asking each other for help, and encouraging each other to think of ideas. Another outcome from using these tools is the trust the students are developing in the instructor as an educator and facilitator of their learning and inquisition. The students were pressed to think outside the normal parameters of their major field. Many of them are accounting and business majors, for example. These activities compelled them to work with classmates whom they may not know. In order for these activities to be successful, students had to trust that the tools and activities would actually help them generate ideas for their service.

Another benefit of the CPS tools comes through the thought processes they enable students to practice. The students may brainstorm and plan on their own; however, when they are asked to do this systematic-



cally and on paper, they process this planning and thought more concretely. Through working with other students and thinking together, they develop problem solving skills and also practice creative thinking. Pushing student to think outside the parameters of “arts and crafts” and to think about creative solutions and new ideas also enables them to understand better what thinking in an “interdisciplinary” manner really means. Another requirement of the course is for students to transfer what they learn and what they know to a variety of contexts. Students took what they knew about their major or human development and created activi-



ties that could be used with Kindergarten to 5th grade students. An outcome of thinking creatively from an interdisciplinary lens is the ability of students to do so outside the classroom. In this case, they transferred their existing partitioned knowledge into ideas for activities they could do with elementary school children. They discussed learning outcomes and what they could teach the students at the after school program from what they already knew.

Finally, through solving problems on their own, the students take responsibility for their learning. In giving students the responsibility for planning their service, rather than telling them what they are to do, the instructor delegates authority and relinquishes control, giving students the choice about how to be involved. In our case,

giving the students choice and responsibility resulted in their working harder and becoming more vested in the project. Typically, students are apprehensive and sometimes have negative feelings toward service learning. Through working together as a learning community, problem solving together, and making choices in their learning, they became motivated to take responsibility for their project AND enjoyed what they were doing.

Applying CPS Tools in Coaching for Professional Development

By Connie Collins (Program specialist, K-12, Fort Wayne Community Schools, Fort Wayne, IN; now at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne).

Getting students to think for themselves, freely voice opinions, and respectfully reflect on new ideas is difficult. Getting high school students to do any of these things is even harder. After a high school training session that focused on how to motivate students in content areas, and after extensive study on brain-based practices that enhance the learning potential for underachieving students, a Biology and an English teacher joined forces with me in a quest to help students learn how to think for themselves. We wanted to find strategies to use to engage students of diverse abilities, learning styles, and interests. Our discussions lead to the conclusion that the majority of the students had little experience in self-reflection and thinking skill development. Many had been exposed to elements of rigor through instructional practices, but few had transferred that expectation into a habit of practice.

After learning and attending training myself on how to use generating and focusing tools, I discovered the power they held as a support to coaching for transfer. Teachers can choose among many strategies and techniques, but if they do not have a way to measure success and document the transfer of learning to students, the methods used become nothing more than teacher-generated tasks for students to complete. I took elements of the SCAMPER tool and integrated them into my own presentations so I could show by example how specific and intentional instruction could guide and prompt transfer. To determine the level of complexity and understanding among the teachers who attended the high school training session, I posed questions like, *what could you substitute, alter, or change in your current instructional practice?* (The “S” in the acronym for SCAMPER represents the idea of substitution). Based on the response to this question, I would then decide if I needed to also inquire about combined or layered instructional methods used in the classroom. The “C” in the acronym for SCAMPER stands for *change* or altering approaches. This is what attracted the Biology and English teacher to seek my support and collegial efforts.

The students that were to be served by the two classroom teachers came from a multitude of ethnic and cultural differences, various financial backgrounds, and diverse educational experiences. The school where this work would take place met the criteria for stereotypical high schools in large urban districts; a few of the students read at an early elementary level; some had very poor educational experiences in the past; many were implanted with the impression that teachers don't care about student success; most received free or reduced lunch; they attended school where the district was under state sanction due to low test scores and difficulty meeting all the requirements of annual yearly progress (AYP). As a team, we knew that reading comprehension (Indiana English/Language State Standard Two) and cohesive writing (combined in Indiana English/Language State Standards Four, Five, and Six) in content areas were difficult tasks for the majority of the students who would be part of our efforts.

Through our planning and collaborative efforts, the three of us decided to use the content skill strength of each teacher to remediate and enrich students. This meant that the English teacher would use her strengths in reading and writing to help those that struggled in that area, and the Biology teacher would use her content strength to enrich and expand upon the state standards. The building principal had arranged the course schedule to allow for a double period between the two content areas for the same group of students. This meant that the modified 4 Block schedule included back-to-back periods of Biology and English for the teachers and students involved. As a team, we used the SCAMPER Generating Tool to plan our collaborative support and instructional goals. I utilized the Probing Questions associated with SCAMPER when coaching and consulting on aspects related to instructional goals and the development of student learning goals. For example, we had to discuss *what instructional goals and concepts could be substituted* when working with students who needed remedial and enrichment support with content area reading and writing. This led our conversations to natural connections of *combined* ("C" in SCAMPER) and *adapted* ("A" in SCAMPER) concepts that could bridge the learning of reading and writing between an English class where students "expected" to do these things, and a Biology class where they were not as familiar with how to read and write for meaning.

As time progressed the teachers began to see the power behind their efforts through the actions of the students. Students were still asking questions related to processes which they could figure out for themselves. They still became quite annoyed when the response to these questions would be, *tell me what you think*. Sometimes the response would be to encourage think-

ing around the elimination, evaluation, or extension of an idea they were working on that needed to be further developed. At our meetings and luncheons together, we often spoke of our own "learning" related to instruction that develops critical and divergent thinkers as an outcome. The component of SCAMPER that asks to "*Put to Other Uses*" ("P" in SCAMPER) encouraged our conversations to extend our own planning and thinking to become more divergent. The teachers knew that if we could model our planning in a way that would reveal the learning process to students without telling them what to do to solve a problem, they too would be able to think about content knowledge in an open-ended, creative way. We agreed as a team that conferencing in formal and informal ways allowed for the team to capture the understanding and transfer that occurred as students began to approach content knowledge in new ways.

During the original district high school presentation that prompted this team effort, I used display boards to show various aspects of diverse products available for retail. The display boards were created as an adaptation to the Generating tool of *Attribute Listing*. The audience needed to learn the process and focus on that aspect to learn more about creative thinking skills. The products selected were common items like car accessories or scuba gear, but may not have been used by many personally in the past. Participants had to view various attributes of products displayed on the board and then consider possible changes or modifications that would make the product better. These changes or modifications had to be based on previous knowledge, understanding of the product use, and/or some form of inferential thinking which could be shared with the whole group in discussion. The end results were awakening! Teachers learned that by being active participants, they could extend their own thinking if they trusted the process and used SCAMPER as a tool. The element of transfer was built into the question techniques formulated around the Probing Question statements that I used when circulating among the groups as they worked on their finished product. The team remembered the powerful insight this had given them and decided that they wanted to utilize this somehow in the classroom.

Through the planning of the two teachers as they met to develop lesson plans and daily instructional specifics, the decision was made to incorporate display boards in a demo and then ask that students develop their own to show their thinking and conceptual understanding as a final product. At this point, the learning and progression of teaching instruction had completely transferred to the students. When conferencing with students, they were

CPS Tools in Education

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able to pose questions that forced student thinking to include changes, modifications, evaluations, combinations, and adaptations. Divergent thinking was being used as a skill. The confidence and abilities of the students increased as they learned how to do this by trusting the inquiry process.

“Thinking Stations” became the title of the display boards generated by students to show their thinking, reformulating, and understanding based on content knowledge from Biology and English class. Conferencing techniques included concepts from the Attributes Lists, even though this was subliminal and based on our own questioning of each other about the progress and process of student learning. The team utilized this in an informal process, but the student product was improved through its use.

Using SCAMPER to Mentor Educators and Extend into Classroom Practice

By Bridget York (Montessori, Grade Level Cluster 7-8, Fort Wayne Community Schools, IN).

The question posed by my mentor (Connie Collins about every aspect of my teaching practices), “In what ways might you change this presentation?” haunted my dreams during the National Writing Project (NWP) I was participating in for professional development. Using the SCAMPER generating tool, I was being forced to re-examine and reflect all the aspects of the Montessori middle school curriculum I had been developing for the Fort Wayne Community School system over the past eight years. Those questions forced me to look not only at the curricular development process, but also to question my students regarding their work on a daily basis.

My Montessori students work from independent learning contracts (study guides) each afternoon. These study guides are a critical curricular aspect of the Montessori middle school instructional practice. The focus is based upon a four-week thematic study of science and social studies. Choice is an essential element of the curriculum along with exploration of multiple intelligences. However, I would conference with the students regarding the work they completed on a surface level to encourage deeper and higher levels of thinking. My questions to them would range from “What do you like about your work?” to “What would you improve?” After processing the NWP experience, I realized this was only scratching the surface of the possible reflection the students were capable of doing.

In preparation for developing students as critical thinkers, at the beginning of the year I gave a lesson on the elements of SCAMPER using the probing questions with slightly modified language in conjunction with a power point I created on Habits of Mind. I informed the students that this questioning process would be a major part of the discussion throughout the research question/paper component of the learning contract. As the students persevered through the independent research writing projects based upon the theme, I held frequent conferences with them, asking them to think critically, using the SCAMPER tool. The specific conference points: using the theme, (a) write four guiding questions that narrow your topic and will enrich your exploration of this topic, explain your author’s purpose, (b) research your topic in 3 to 5 reliable sources and take the appropriate notes, (c) pre-write your essay, (d) write a best first draft, (e) self/revise and edit, (f) have a peer revise and edit, (g) create a draft to be revised and edited by your teacher, (h) create a publishable piece. At each of these points, the individual student and I collaborated using selected elements of SCAMPER to guide them. This allowed students to think creatively and increased contextual understanding. The questions lead to an entirely new framework of thinking and final student product. Examples of this would be the student who began his paper focusing on the life of Christopher Columbus and the Seeds of Change, but then became fascinated at the research stage and chose to focus on evidence that Columbus devastated the Native populations he found (Indiana Social Studies Standard –(8.1.1). Another example is a student new to the concept of choice who was not motivated to discover her own topic relating to economics. Through the use of SCAMPER words and probing questions, I was able to guide her to the subject of taxes and how that would affect her personal spending budget. The implementation of the tools allowed the students to establish conceptually depth and ownership of their learning.

Summer 2008 Professional Development Institute: July 16-18, 2008

Creative Problem Solving (CPS) in Education

Recently published reports, such as those of the National Center on Education and the Economy's New Commission on the Skills or the American Workforce, highlight the vital role of creativity, innovation, problem solving, and teamwork in educating today's students for the challenges of success in the world workplace of the future. As highlighted in the NCEE Commissioned Paper, "Sources of Innovation and Creativity: A Summary of Research" (read or download the report at: www.skillscommission.org/commissioned.htm), our Creative Problem Solving framework—CPS Version 6.1™— provides a powerful, practical set of tools and resources to help individuals and teams learn and apply creative and critical thinking, solve problems, manage change, and build effective teams. 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. Educators can apply CPS Version 6.1™ in many important ways. For example, you can use CPS to:

- Guide planning for student success and positive gains in achievement.
- Support leadership and teamwork in projects (for both adults and students).
- Enhance curriculum development and empower individuals and teams to deal with real-life problems and challenges.
- Expand and enhance life skills and career planning and counseling activities—provide students the essential tools they will need for success in the workplace of tomorrow.
- Provide powerful thinking and problem-solving tools that link creative and critical thinking with academic content standards.
- Support and empower school advisory teams, site-based management, and school improvement or strategic planning efforts.
- 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. Individual participants are welcome, but we also encourage teams to attend from the same school or school district. Team participation helps to build a foundation for follow-up implementation. The 2008 Institute will begin at 9:00 AM. on **Wednesday, July 16**, and close at 3:00 PM on **Friday, July 18**.

Registration Information

The Institute will be held at a hotel in Sarasota, Florida. We will arrange for special room rates for Institute participants; you will receive specific information with your registration confirmation packet. Sarasota is located on the Gulf of Mexico (on the west coast of Florida), about 60 miles south of Tampa and approximately two hours southwest of Orlando. The number of places is limited, so we recommend early registration. Late enrollments will be accepted subject to space availability. The registration fee is \$550.00. For teams of two or three participants registering together, the fee is \$525.00 per person, and for teams of four or more, the fee is \$500.00 per person. The registration fee includes: program fees, course textbooks and handout materials, three continental breakfasts, refreshments at daily breaks, three luncheons, and follow-up with the Institute Staff (two phone or email consultations per participant). Pre-payment is required (we accept MasterCard, Visa, American Express, or school purchase orders). To register, contact the Center for Creative Learning, 4921 Ringwood Meadow, Sarasota, FL 34235 USA. To register by phone, call 941.342.9928, by fax to 941.342.0064, or by email to: info@creativelearning.com.

Supporting Florida's *Frameworks for K-12 Gifted Learners*: Equipping Educators to Respond to New Challenges

In 2007, the Florida Department of Education released a new document, *Florida's Frameworks for K-12 Gifted Learners* sponsored by its Working on Gifted Issues Challenge Grant Project and the Florida Association for the Gifted (access the document at: <http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/sss/frameworks.pdf>). This document provides extensive and detailed guidelines for curriculum and instruction that will enable high-ability students to meet the challenges of learning and productivity in a world of complex and constant change. Implementing the *Frameworks* effectively calls for professionals who are trained and experienced in applying a wide variety of skills for carrying out rigorous and challenging instruction on a daily basis, and for differentiating instruction skillfully to meet learners' unique needs. The *Frameworks* also call for a high level of expertise in many process methods and tools—calling on all educators to be apply strategies and tools for creative and critical thinking, problem solving, planning and decision making, teamwork and collaboration, and open-ended inquiry into real-life problems and challenges.

We believe that this challenging set of goals and objectives offers a clear illustration of the potential importance and value of our contemporary Creative Problem Solving model ("CPS Version 6.1™") in effective programming for high-ability students. Since CPS involves much more than a fixed set of "steps" that students learn and apply in a prescribed, linear manner, but offers a comprehensive *system* instead, it weaves together many elements for dealing with the complex high-level challenges envisioned in

the standards. Goal 4 of the Florida Frameworks, for example, is central in illustrating the connections with CPS Version 6.1™.

Goal 4: By graduation, the student identified as gifted will be able to think creatively and critically to identify and solve real-world problems.

The relevance and applications of CPS are pervasive in Goal 4. In CPS, for example, students learn, practice, and apply:

- five specific tools ("brainstorming" and beyond!) to generate many, varied, and original ideas,
- five specific tools for focusing their thinking.
- four specific guidelines for effectiveness in generating ideas.
- four specific guidelines for effectiveness when focusing their thinking.

In learning and applying CPS, students (and teachers) experience and develop expertise with a research-based, theoretically sound system for finding and defining problems, generating solutions, and translating their ideas into effective action. There are strong linkages between CPS and all of the *Framework's* seven goals and 21 objectives. e've identified 33 key elements of the CPS Version 6.1™ system, for example, in which there are clear connections with goals and objectives in the *Florida Frameworks*. We invite *Creative Learning Today* readers to read and analyze this new document. If you wish to see a copy of a matrix identifying the "points of connection" between the specific goals and objectives and the components, stages, and tools of CPS, we invite you to contact Dr. Treffinger (don@creativelearning.com) for more information.

Book Review— "Briefly Noted"

Ameritales: Abraham Lincoln and the Forest of Little Pigeon Creek; written by T.D. Carter and Illustrated by Randy Jennings; San Diego: AmeriTales Entertainment. 2007. Hardcover, \$19.95, ISBN 9780979873904. Reviewed by Dr. John E. Syster, Sarasota, FL.

AmeriTales claims to be "a family entertainment company that presents action-adventure content based on non-fictional characters." They clearly state that in their writing "real history is spiced with fiction." Not that it was hard to notice because young Abe Lincoln's companion is a turkey who understands Abe's every word and saves his life when a bear attacks! Nevertheless the brightly colored pages are filled with adventure and speak not only of facing your fears, but also of the importance that books can play in our learning. Similar to the *ValuTales* of a previous generation (written by Spencer Johnson and Ann Donegan Johnson, originally in the early 1970s), this series promises an exposure for young readers to some of the characters of our American history.

Conference Announcement:

Excellence in Education 2008: Future Minds

Paris-France (July 2-4, 2008)

The International Centre for Innovation in Education (ICIE) is committed to the development of all learners as productive world citizens and leaders for the future. This International Conference will provide a conference programme with the highest calibre of keynote speakers, invited speakers, and a large number of scholars and presenters alongside a selection of exhibitors whose products and services are of direct benefit to the education community.

Conference Aims and Objectives:

- Encourage volunteer spirit;
- Promote excellence and sustain quality;
- Connecting Communities;
- Strive for improvement;
- Evolve responsibly;
- Meet community expectations of quality;
- Sustain competitiveness and viability; and
- Balance innovation with core essentials.

Categories:

New Millennium Learner and Gifted Education: models of excellence in education; Learning Environment: standards and curricula, tasks and materials, and communication; Technology and e-Learning; Instructors and Teacher: competencies, teaching methods, and staff development; Learner: competencies, individual differences, intervention and development; Programme Development: examples, planning models and components, implementation and evaluation; Integrated Services: guidance and counselling, community services, and mentorship; and Future Trends: globalisation and networking.

We encourage anyone with an interest in excellence in education and gifted education to attend this conference. The participants will include: university academics, educational psychologists, education policy advisers and managers, business and industry leaders, gifted and talented program coordinators, school heads, graduate students, parents and caretakers. It provides you with the opportunity to: Explore the latest developments in Education; Examine the need for sustainable educational systems; Integrate the latest technology into the education system; Debate the future of education – What are the challenges ahead? Learn from innovative case studies where educational institutions and LEA's have taken the initiative; Engage in a series of seminars designed to debate the theory and practice of real improvement in education; and Engage in pre-conference workshops designed to develop participants' competencies.

Contact the Chairman of the Organizing Committee:

Dr. Todd Lubart,

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Important Dates: Online abstract submission (December, 2007); Online registration available (December, 2007); abstract submission closes (March 16, 2008); Notification of acceptance of abstract (March 31, 2008); End of the early registration incentive (April 20, 2008); All participants must be registered (April 20, 2008); and final programme published (May 25, 2008).

<http://www.icieconference.net>

Teaching Styles and Problem Solving Style

By Deirdre Doheny, John Houtz, and Edwin Selby
Fordham University

Responses of 38 female teachers to a survey of their teaching experiences were correlated to their scores on *VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving* (Selby, Treffinger, & Isaksen, 2002, 2007; Selby, Treffinger, Isaksen, & Lauer, 2004). Teachers' ages ranged from 22 to 52 years and 0 to 18 years of teaching experience. These teachers were teaching elementary and secondary grades, regular or special education classes. The *VIEW* was administered and scored by certified *VIEW* users during these teachers' graduate classes at a major New York metropolitan university.

Teaching experiences were surveyed with 30 Likert-scale questions drawn from the Classroom Activities Questionnaire (Cicchelli, 1988; Steele, House, & Kerins, 1971) and researcher-constructed questions.

Overall *VIEW* averages showed teachers to be more Developer-oriented (Mean = 81.66, SD = 13.03 compared to the hypothetical *VIEW* midpoint of 72) on the Orientation to Change (OC) dimension, but showed no style preferences on Manner of Processing (MP) or Ways of Deciding (WD) dimensions (Means = 32.29, 33.53, SDs = 9.41, 8.76, respectively, compared to the hypothetical midpoints of 32). Age correlated significantly ($r = .33, p < .05$) with Ways of Deciding, suggesting that older teachers exhibited a more Task-oriented problem solving style.

Partial correlations were computed, controlling for age, among *VIEW* dimensions and individual responses to survey questions. One *VIEW* score intercorrelation was significant for the OC and WD dimensions ($r = .38, p < .05$), suggesting that Developer style and a Task-oriented decision style are positively related.

As for teaching experiences, several significant correlations were observed, controlling for teachers' age, and involving each of the three *VIEW* dimensions. Table 1 presents these results. On the Orientation to Change dimension, a more Developer style appeared to correlate with individual conferences with students for the purpose of diagnosing their interests and needs.

On the dimension of Manner of Processing, a more External style appeared to correlate with teachers' resistance to the influence of negative information about pupils, the use of multimedia, and active participation by the class in discussions. Finally, on the dimension of Ways of Deciding, a more Person-oriented problem solving style appeared to correlate with students initiating identifying problems and challenges to be used in designing and carrying out their own learning projects, with teachers providing opportunities for independent student actions, through the use of contracts or learning agreements and with student record-keeping, and with teachers counseling students individually, encouraging reflection and self-evaluation of process and content accomplishments.

Of those relationships that were significant, results appear consistent with *VIEW* theory. What may be characterized as more "constructivist, student-oriented" classrooms appear associated with more Person-oriented or External problem-solving-styled teachers. These theoretical consistencies offer important evidence of *VIEW*'s predictive validity.

That a more Developer style was associated with individual conferences among this group of teachers also may be consistent with *VIEW* theory because the purpose of such conferences was clear and specific—

to learn about student needs and interests. Concern for details and specifics is a characteristic of the Developer style of problem solving, while a potential weakness of the Explorer style is to overlook details in pursuit of larger, more global objectives.

Of course, limitations to these data are obvious. No male teachers were included. (Note: Only two male teachers responded to the survey.) Only 40-odd teachers in total responded with complete data from a survey distributed to several hundred. Of the total number of correlations computed in this research, it is possible some could be significant by chance alone. On the other hand, the *VIEW* data had been collected while teachers were enrolled in classes leading to their respective degrees. The surveys were conducted several years later, after teachers had been teaching up to five years post graduation. Thus, it is equally possible that no correlations would be significant after a gap of several years.

As a final note, it must be acknowledged that the survey questions, themselves, may be "suggestive" of what many consider "ideal" teaching practices. There may be an obvious "social desirability" bias in these types of questions. A paper-and-pencil teacher survey is a very "high-inference" measure and cannot substitute for actual classroom observations or even ratings of classroom practices by students, themselves, or teacher supervisors. What can be stated with certainty, however, is that there exists substantial theory behind problem solving styles, enough to warrant continued research. If the findings above are true, then the *VIEW* assessment has demonstrated important predictive validity.

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Table 1
Partial Correlations among VIEW Dimensions and Survey Responses (N = 38, df = 35)

<i>Correlation</i>	<i>Survey Item (Higher Rating Indicates Agreement)</i>
+ .342 with OC ($p < .05$)	"I confer with individual students to diagnose interests and needs."
- .472 with MP ($p < .01$)	"I do not allow "negative" information about my pupils to keep me from engaging them in learning activities."
- .386 with MP ($p < .01$)	"I use multi-media technology in my lessons."
- .358 with MP ($p < .05$)	"My class actively participates in discussions."
- .341 with WD ($p < .05$)	"Students initiate identification of problems and challenges to be used in designing and carrying out their own learning projects."
- .391 with WD ($p < .01$)	"I provide opportunities for independent student actions, through the use of contracts or learning agreements, and with student record-keeping."
- .461 with WD ($p < .01$)	"I counsel with students individually, encouraging reflection and self-evaluation of process and content accomplishments."

Editorial

(Continued from Page 1)

true today. We do not know all the knowledge, information, or content that today's students will need, or the answers to the questions they will face. Indeed, increasingly, we do not even know the questions. These realities of our world provide the foundation or the "staging platform" for us to acknowledge the great importance of empowering students to become creative thinkers, critical thinkers, and problem solvers— people who will be able to find, learn, and apply new knowledge in changing situations and to complex, novel, open-ended challenges; who will be able to make the most of the opportunities they discover or create in their life; and who will proceed confidently and competently into the new horizons of life and work. In view of the 1982 list of tomorrow's basics in the opening paragraph, the significant question might be, "Is it tomorrow yet?"

We might say that "a new renaissance," a time of rebirth and creative opportunity, is at hand. It is possible today to provide students with tools they will need to be prepared for the world of life and work they will encounter in the future. We can enable students to find and solve real-life problems and to manage change. Even in times in which there is great emphasis on basic learning and doing well on standardized tests— indeed, particularly in such times— it remains important to balance the emphasis between process and content in teaching and

learning. Students who are competent in the basics of productive thinking and CPS as well as the basics of content areas will be lifelong learners, creators, and problem solvers who can live and work effectively in a world of constant change.

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One Chapter Ends and New Ones Await

One “chapter” in the work of Dr. Don Treffinger, President of the Center for Creative Learning, came to a close at the end of 2007, after eight years in process. Dr. Treffinger stepped down as Editor of *Parenting for High Potential*, the quarterly magazine for parents published by the National Association for Gifted Children. Don served as Editor-in-chief for 32 issues of PHP, from March 2000 through December 2007.

“The experience of working on a magazine aimed at parents, rather than at the professional teaching and research audiences, was stimulating and rewarding,” Don observed, “but, for NAGC, and for me, it was time for new faces, new directions, and new opportunities.” Dr. Jennifer Jolly, of Louisiana State University, became the new Editor, effective with the March 2008 issue. Dr. Treffinger’s work as PHP Editor was recognized with the presentation of an award by NAGC President Del Siefle and Association Editor Joe Renzulli at the 2007 NAGC Conference in Minneapolis (see accompanying photo).

Dr. Treffinger— also a former Editor of the *Gifted Child Quarterly* and a member of the NAGC Board of Directors for several terms— will continue to be involved in the organization, joining the *Gifted Child Quarterly*’s Editorial Advisory Board, under the leadership of that journal’s new Editor, Dr. Carolyn Callahan of the University of Virginia.

The completion of Dr. Treffinger’s work with PHP also creates time for new professional work, with an emphasis on new directions in each of the Center for Creative Learning’s three major areas of emphasis: Creative Problem Solving, the Levels of Service Approach to Talent Development, and problem-solving style using the VIEW instrument.

Creative Problem Solving. One new initiative in this area is to plan and

carry out research on the effectiveness and impact of a systematic, flexible approach to learning and using CPS by upper elementary and middle-level students. The new CPS Kit provides a comprehensive set of instructional resources that will be well-suited to experimental investigations in the classroom setting.

LoS Approach to Talent Development. We are also moving forward with a variety of new print resources and plans for web-based study resources on LoS that will help schools and school districts engage in self-study and systematic planning for LoS implementation.

VIEW: Problem-Solving Style. Our research on problem-solving style, both with adults and with adolescents, continues to move forward. Ongoing projects are in process with both the Future Problem Solving International program and Destination Imagination®. We are also investigating the development and field-testing of new resources linking problem-solving style with differentiation of instruction.

We encourage educators who are interested in participating in a new series of studies in any of these three areas during the 2008-09 school year to contact the Center to learn more about the possibilities we are exploring.



Dr. Del Siegle (left) and Dr. Joe Renzulli (right) present an award to Dr. Don Treffinger, outgoing editor of *Parenting for High Potential* magazine, at the 2007 NAGC Convention in Minneapolis.

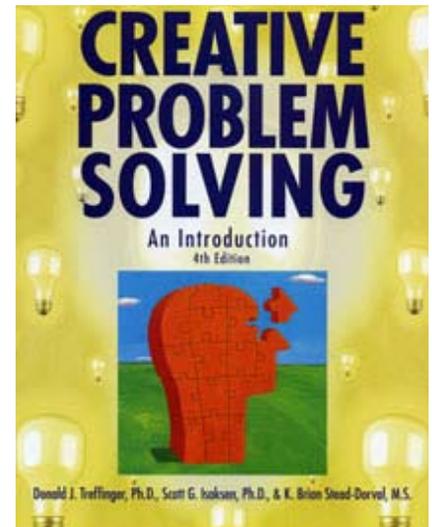
Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction (4th Ed.)

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; and, 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.

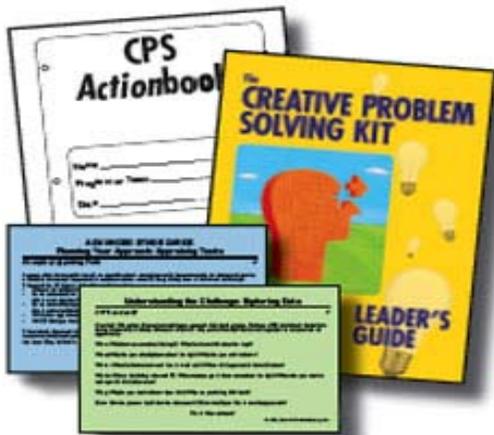


\$24.95

The Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Kit

A Practical Tool for Learning and Applying CPS

By Donald Treffinger, Carole Nassab, Patricia Schoonover, Edwin Selby, Cindy Shepardson, Carol 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*!

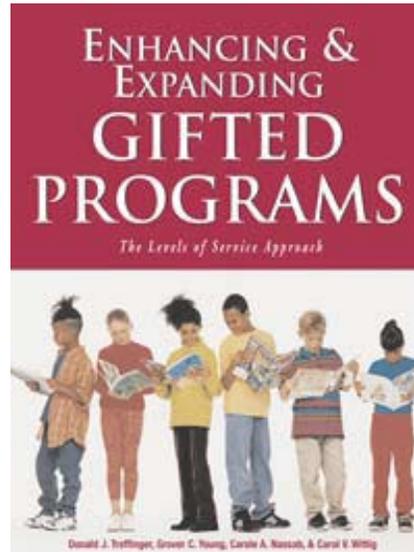
Complete kit, \$79.95

Expanding and Enhancing Gifted Programs: The Levels of Service Approach

By: Donald J. Treffinger, Grover C. Young, Carole A. Nassab, & Carol V. Wittig.

This practical guidebook offers an innovative, field-tested approach to programming for giftedness and talent development. The Levels of Service (LoS) approach to programming is a research-supported, common-sense framework for program development. The authors, leaders in the field for more than two decades, offer a straightforward method of organizing student experiences. This how-to manual for effective gifted programming describes and discusses four levels of organizing and providing services, with specific examples of services at each level.

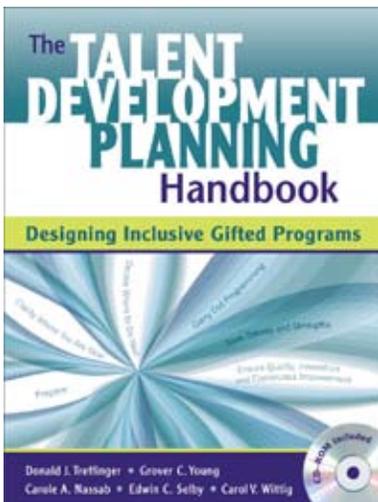
Paperbound, 134 pp., \$29.95



New!

The Talent Development Planning Handbook: Designing Inclusive Gifted Programs

By: Donald J. Treffinger, Grover C. Young, Carole A. Nassab, Edwin C. Selby, & Carol V. Wittig



Gain tools to custom-build programs that nurture students' strengths and talents!

Gifted programs should be as innovative, unique, and ever-evolving as the students they serve. This comprehensive handbook provides the expert guidance and tools necessary for shaping a contemporary, inclusive talent development program tailored to students' individual needs and strengths. Rather than imposing a "one-size-fits-all" model, this guide offers a flexible six-stage framework for planning, implementing, evaluating, and enhancing gifted education programs. The authors draw upon current theory, research, and more than 20 years of professional experience with schools, districts, and state education agencies to provide proven approaches for designing new programs and reinvigorating existing ones. Practical tips and ready-to-use resources include: CD-ROM with reproducibles and presentations aligned with each chapter; Needs assessment and climate inventory exercises and resources; Methods for constructing and implementing action plans; Strategies for tackling logistics, including how to form planning committees and effectively lead the planning process; Program goal-setting and evaluation tools

Ideal for gifted education coordinators, administrators and special education directors, *The Talent Development Planning Handbook* covers best practices from leading experts to inspire innovation, improvement, growth, and change for talent development that contributes to the total school program. **\$34.95**

New! An Introduction To Problem-Solving Style

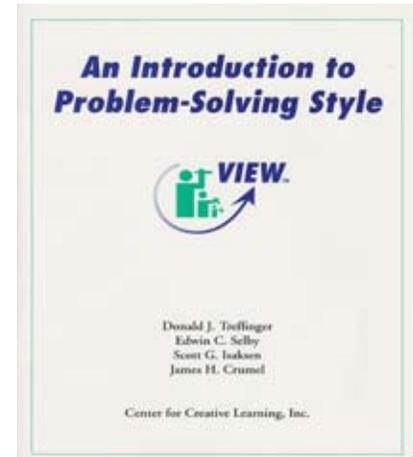
By Donald J. Treffinger, Edwin C. Selby, Scott G. Isaksen, & James H. Crumel

This booklet provides a concise, practical overview of problem-solving style. It outlines the nature of problem-solving style (based on extensive theory and research), explaining in clear, non-technical language what problem-solving styles are—and are not—and describes three problem-solving style dimensions and six styles. Drawing on the authors' research with more than 12,000 people, from ages 12 – 80 in more than 16 countries, the book explains the important and unique personal characteristics and implications, benefits, and risks of each style. In addition, the book discusses: the implications of style for effective problem solving; the importance of style for group composition, teamwork, and enhancing work relationships; and, the unique ways the three style dimensions interact with each other. This book is a valuable resource for building self-understanding and for all teams, groups, or organizations that are concerned with effective leadership, teamwork, solving problems, and managing change.

(2007; 34 pp., paperbound). Order #1045.

\$12.00

Note: Discounts are available for quantity purchases of this title.

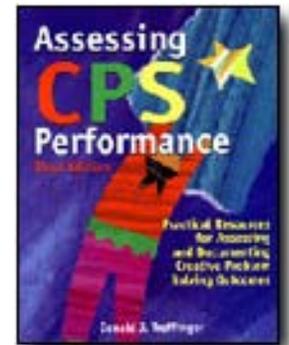


Classic Titles on Creative Learning and CPS Special Prices While Quantities Last

Assessing CPS Performance, 3rd Edition

By Donald Treffinger

Updated to accompany CPS Version 6.1™'s New Language! These resources will help you in your efforts to link CPS instruction and today's focus on "authentic assessment". It offers a variety of practical, reproducible instruments and checklists for use in: evaluating students' knowledge of CPS strategies and concepts; assessing their attitudes about CPS and their self-concepts as creative problem solvers; and assessing and documenting the effectiveness or impact of instructional or training programs in Creative Problem Solving. These instruments are offered in a Research Edition format, for field testing and group use. 59 pages, 2000, ISBN 1-882664-66-3, Paperback, Catalog # 3024-25

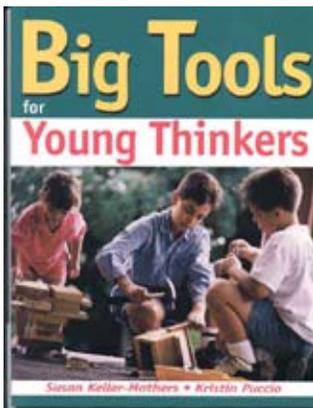


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Big Tools for Young Thinkers, 2nd Edition

Facilitating CPS for Primary Students

By Susan Keller-Mathers & Kristin Puccio



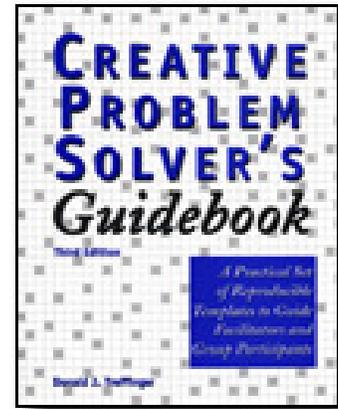
Children in the primary grades can learn and apply a wide variety of powerful thinking tools for generating options or for focusing their thinking. This book includes 18 specific lessons, with reproducible activities for introducing and practicing these tools with young children. There are two lessons on the basic guidelines for generating and focusing, followed by two lessons for each of eight different tools (brainstorming, mindmapping, forced relationships, SCAMPER, hits, highlighting, A-Lo-U, and the evaluation matrix). 61 pages, 2000, ISBN 1-882664-60-4, Paperback, Catalog # 3033

\$17.95

Creative Problem Solver's Guidebook, Revised Edition

By Donald Treffinger

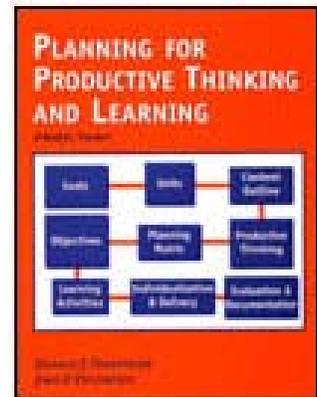
Updated to accompany CPS Version 6.1™'s New Language! The Creative Problem Solver's Guidebook contains more than 20 reproducible forms to guide individuals and groups in applying CPS. Use them as templates for organizing flip charts or CPS session notes; overheads or handouts to accompany CPS instruction; or for creating booklets to guide group participants through CPS. Each form is clearly labeled to guide the user in the CPS stages. 54 pages, 2000. ISBN 1-882511-02-6, Paperback, Catalog # 3010-25 **\$17.95**



Planning for Productive Thinking and Learning

Donald Treffinger & John Feldhusen

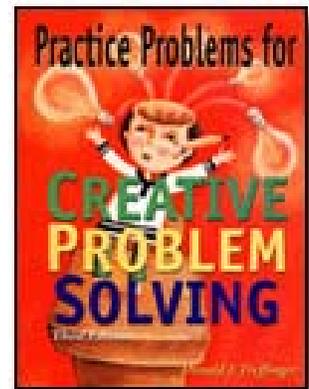
A practical guide to curricular and instructional planning for today's students and tomorrow's needs, from the foundation skills and tools to involvement in real life opportunities and challenges. The authors "Reach Each You Teach" guided thousands of teachers in instructional planning using Bloom's Taxonomy since 1979; this book will enable you to "reach beyond" Bloom. Learn and apply: nine Curriculum Guideposts and 14 Instructional Guideposts for Productive Thinking; three levels of Productive Thinking, with sample outcomes and activities for each level (Foundations, Realistic Tasks, Real-Life Problems and Challenges); Ways to incorporate students' talent strengths and learning style preferences; Metacognitive skills and a constructive classroom climate for Productive Thinking; New ways to evaluate and document learning. 71 pages, 1998, Paperback, Catalog #3029-25, **\$14.95**



Practice Problems for Creative Problem Solving, 3rd Edition

By Donald Treffinger

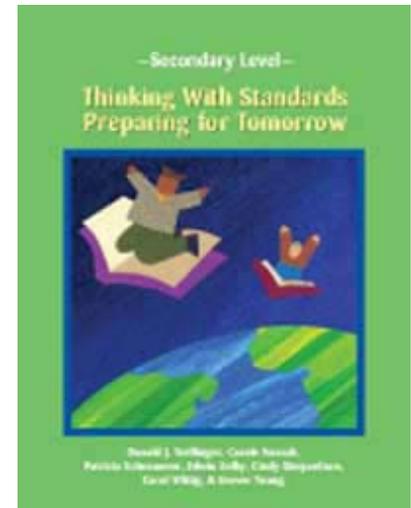
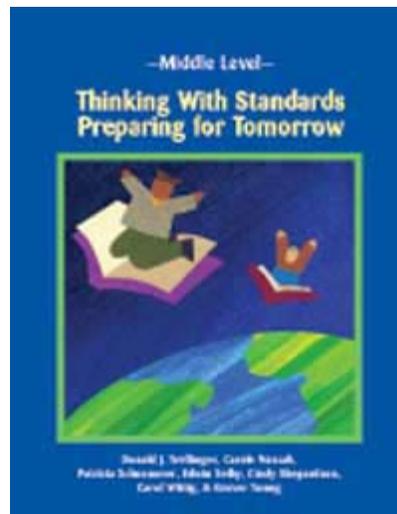
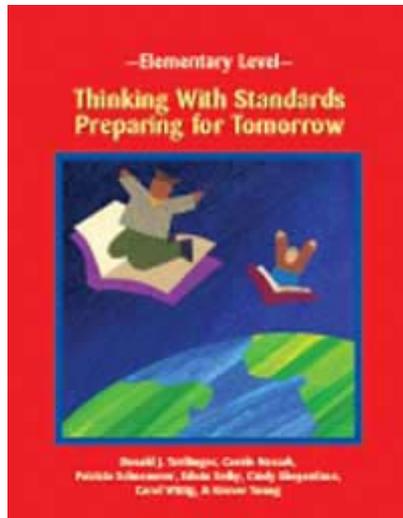
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Thinking With Standards: Preparing for Tomorrow

By Don Treffinger, Carole Nassab, Pat Schoonover, Ed Selby, Cindy Shepardson, Carol Wittig, Grover Young

Engage your students' creative and critical thinking at the same time you help them to meet the content or curriculum standards in your subject area. This series of books is filled with activities that help students apply creative and critical thinking to traditional subject area content. In addition to the reproducible, ready-to-use activities contained in this book, the authors explain how creative and critical thinking can be infused into any content you teach. This is a must-have resource for teachers wanting to infuse thinking skills into the traditional curriculum. Volume I: Elementary (Grades 3-5). Catalog #3034-25; Volume II: Middle (Grades 6-8). Catalog #3035-25; Volume III: Secondary (Grades 9-12), Catalog #3036-25. **Regularly \$24.95 each, Now \$12.95 each.**



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. 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 password, 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 sample of this course is now available for your FREE examination at the Center for Creative Learning website: www.creativelearning.com/cpsedemo.

Funding Opportunities for Educators

Sparkplug Foundation: Education & Teaching

Sparkplug aims to support projects that deal with “the whole student” and with learning as a community activity. In the past, this has included literacy projects that bring parents & kids together to learn, projects that use a neighborhood as a classroom, projects that help teachers share ideas about creative, relevant curricula, etc. The program guidelines say: “We’re especially interested in supporting critical and investigative thinking, and projects that address class disparities in education. We also try to fund projects that reach a lot of people -- or a whole community -- and that can make a big difference in people’s lives. To apply: First, call us for a talk-through of your proposal. Please be aware that we only consider applications that have been discussed with us in advance. Next, complete and mail your application to our P.O. Box. The next deadline is May 23, 2008. For more information, check the foundation’s website: <http://www.sparkplugfoundation.org/>”

VSA arts Playwright Discovery Program

The VSA arts Playwright Discovery Program (<http://www.vsarts.org/x244.xml>) invites middle and high school students to examine how disability affects their lives and the lives of others, and express their views through the art of playwriting.

Playwrights may write from their own experience or about an experience in the life of another person or fictional character. Young playwrights with and without disabilities are encouraged to submit a script. Entries may be the work of an individual student or collaboration by a group or class of students.

The winning play will be professionally produced at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The winning playwright receives \$2,000 and a trip to Washington, D.C., to see his/her play performed. Any student with or without a disability is eligible to submit an entry. Authors must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. and must be students in grades 6 to 12 (or equivalent).

Christopher Columbus Awards: Innovation Generation

The Christopher Columbus Awards, a national community-based science and technology program for middle school students, is accepting entries for the 2007-08 school year.

The program challenges students to work in teams of up to four, with an adult coach, to identify a problem in their community and apply the scientific method to create an innovative solution to that problem. Coaches may be teachers, parents, community leaders, or mentors. Teams do not need to be affiliated with a school to enter.

Four finalist teams and their coaches will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Walt Disney World to attend National Championship Week and compete for U.S. Savings Bonds plus a \$200 development grant to further refine their idea.

The awards program is sponsored by the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, with support from the National Science Foundation. Entry is free. For complete program guidelines, application materials, and information on previous winners, visit the program’s Web site: <http://www.christophercolumbusawards.com/>

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.

Creative Learning Today is published on an occasional basis and distributed electronically without cost to interested readers.

Direct all inquiries and changes of email address to don@creativelearning.com

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This issue of *Creative Learning Today* includes our special *publications update*. You will find information about several new publications and special price offers on a number of “classic” titles on creative learning and CPS. We have also included information about our Summer 2008 Professional Development Institute on CPS in Education and our CPS in Education distance learning opportunities. Visit our website for additional details about our publications and programs.

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