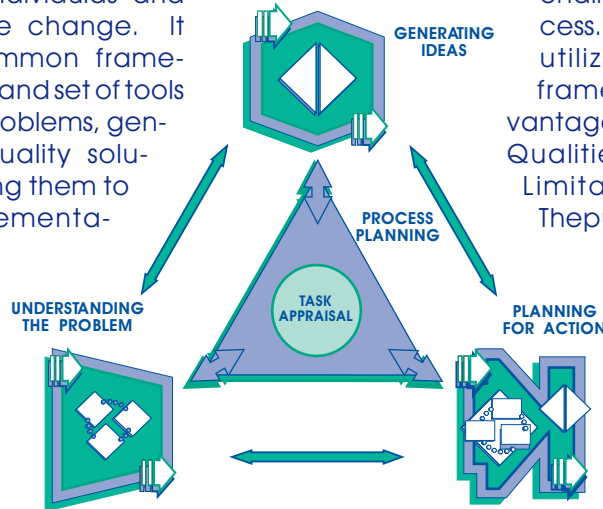


Creative Problem Solving (CPS) is a powerful and flexible process used to help individuals and groups manage change. It provides a common framework, language and set of tools for identifying problems, generating high quality solutions, and moving them to effective implementation.

The CPS-B® conducts training programs and application interventions with individuals and organizations around the world. CPS is utilized in a wide variety of contexts. Individuals

have applied the framework to both personal and professional challenges with great success. One of the many tools utilized within the CPS framework examines Advantages, Limitations, Unique Qualities and Overcoming Limitations (ALUo).

The purpose of the ALUo is aimed at helping individuals and organizations move novelty to implementation. To help illustrate the power and flexibility of CPS this edition of the Communiqué includes two examples of how individuals have used the ALUo in different contexts.



"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us."

**Western Union
Internal Memo,
1876**

While a student in the Masters' Degree Program in Creativity at the Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College, I was presented an opportunity to work inside of an office facility. A letter from the office manager vaguely described a situation in which she thought we might be of some help. Great! An opportunity to apply! The next day, I scheduled a meeting with the manager to better understand the situation surrounding the context and the need for a possible intervention.

The situation as explained by the manager was a need to increase productivity. The lack of problem-solving

skills was cited by the office manager as a major barrier to productivity. A tour of the facilities followed. From that tour I got a clear sense of the concerns. The facility

Applying the ALUo by Glenn Wilson

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was a branch office of a large northeastern U.S. medical assessment organization in which the employees (operators) entered data from assessment worksheets (approximately 40 pages each) into "units" (electronic worksheets) on a computer. Once completed, these units were printed and sent to the customer as a final product. It was mandatory that each unit be 100% error free, 100% of the time, out the door within the day, and a high unit production quota be matched or surpassed.

To specifically address the need for problem solving skills, Scott Robinson (a colleague of mine) and I began to instruct our teams in the use of Creative Problem Solving (CPS). During one of the early debrief sessions, an operator asked me a great question: "Why are we taking the time to learn how to identify our problems and come up with ideas when we know our ideas will never be listened to?" Now, I for one love great questions (one's I can't answer) and this was a zinger. As the discussion with our teams continued, we learned that the operators continually submitted ideas to management with no response! Not one operator in the entire group, that had turned in a suggestion or idea to the office manager, ever got a reply. The ideas just seemed to disappear. An "idea cemetery," I thought. I assured them that I would talk to the office manager about this matter.

When I questioned the office manager about the situation, she agreed that she did not provide feedback to the employees about their ideas. She stated that most ideas submitted were too lengthy and/or did not provide her with the necessary information she needed to make decisions. Her time was limited for such matters as she was managing two offices in the same district. When I asked her if she would support a system that would simultaneously make efficient use of her time and provide the information necessary for making decisions, she agreed that she would.

After clarifying the manager's needs, I went to

work on a new suggestion system for the office. The "system," to be successful, needed to do two things: (1) provide the office manager with a simple, effective, and efficient way to look at a new idea or suggestion; and (2) provide constructive, written feedback, presented in a way that encouraged further development on the idea or suggestion.

"Why are we taking the time to learn how to identify our problems and come up with ideas when we know our ideas will never be listened to?"

gestions are presented first. This helps to identify the strong points and the positive aspects of the new idea or suggestion. Next, the "limitations" of the idea or suggestion are presented. The limitations help to identify the concerns or weak points in the new idea or suggestion. These limitations should always be stated using the stems: "How to...", "How might...", or "In what ways might...". By turning the limitations into questions (problem statements) they can be overcome and developed through idea generation. The third step is

To address these issues, I developed a two part system utilizing Advantages, Limitations, Unique Qualities, and Overcoming Limitations (ALUo) (Isaksen & Treffinger, 1985) and a complementary worksheet. When using the ALUo, the "advantages" of the idea or sug-

looking at the "unique qualities" of the idea. Identifying these qualities preserves the elements of novelty in the option that are useful and valuable. The fourth step is "overcoming the limitations" identified earlier. To be even more productive, the limitations can be ranked from "most impor-

tant" to "least important." When the "most important" limitations have been overcome, many of the remaining limitations tend to disappear.

The benefits of using an ALUo in this situation, provided the operators and the office manager a pathway for communication by providing: a portable and flexible framework by which to present an idea or suggestion to management; a process for feedback which kept the idea or suggestion open and therefore in the hands of the person who was in a position to move it forward; and a process for positive feedback from management

"The benefits of using an ALUo in this situation, provided the operators and the office manager a pathway for communication..."

to the presenter showing that the idea or suggestion had indeed been reviewed.

Although the ALUo by itself is a powerful tool, the office manager required additional data to help her make decisions. To address this concern, I developed an additional worksheet (to be used in conjunction with the ALUo) to identify the "relative advantages" (Rogers, 1983) of the idea or suggestion being presented. Relative advantage is the advantage your idea, if implemented, will provide over the "old" idea. In this situation, the office manager identified time, cost, and acceptability as important factors that she needed to help make a decision on the ideas or suggestions presented.

Once developed, the two part suggestion system was presented to the office manager for approval. She approved the system, and promised to support it by providing feedback to the operators using the ALUo format, and to return each idea or suggestion within a one-week time period. She also mandated that only ideas and suggestions using this new system would be recognized.

Upon follow-up with the organization, the operators informed us that over five ideas and suggestions had been presented to date and that two of them had already been approved for implementation (one dealing with having the

software program modified, and the other dealing with computer hardware). That was two more ideas in a 12 week time frame than for all of last year! The office manager informed us that she implemented the ALUo based suggestion system in her other district office and had set up a recognition/reward system for ideas/suggestions approved for use. I made an additional inquiry into the continued use of the suggestion system six weeks after Scott and I left the organization. The office manager had been promoted to a new job and

was gone. The ALUo based suggestion system remained!!!!

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Glenn Wilson is President of CEO Consultants based in Zelenople, PA. Wilson holds a master's degree in Creativity and Innovation from Buffalo State College and a master's degree in Technology Education from California University of Pennsylvania. Glenn is also a CPS-B Certified Facilitator, KAI Certified user.

"The office manager had been promoted to a new job and was gone. The ALUo based suggestion system remained!!!!"

Book Review

DePree, M. (1992). Leadership Jazz. New York: Currency Doubleday. ISBN: 0385420188

Review

In this easy to read work by Max DePree, Chairman of the Board of Herman Miller, Inc., the author uses the metaphor of a jazz band to convey several aspects of the philosophy of leadership known as "Servant Leadership." Robert Greenleaf first proposed this view of leadership in 1970 in an essay, The Servant as Leader. DePree believes that a jazz band is a good metaphor for servant leadership because both work within a framework which acknowledges the unpredictability of the future and relies upon the gifts of individuals.

Several chapters relate directly to creativity. DePree advocates nurturing and protecting gifted and creative persons in organizations. In the Kirton vocabulary, these are the individuals with more innovative preferences (working outside the box). Another chapter discusses the value of amateurs to any enterprise. These are the self-motivated, curious, nonconformists who often see things from very different points-of-view. This is a novel and useful book with an interesting slant on leadership in an environment of rapid change.

By Susan Besemer

A View From 30,000 Feet by Leslie Marmor

Many of us are familiar with the expression, "use the right tool for the job," and most of us have experienced the difficulties that result when we are not able to use that tool or we simply are not aware of what the right tool might be. Just ask a carpenter to build a house using a wrench rather than a hammer. On the other hand, utilizing the right tool can make our lives much easier. Like a carpenter, a Creative Problem Solving Facilitator relies on a toolbox to build a productive outcome.

One of the tools utilized in the CPS framework is the Advantages, Limitations, Unique Qualities and Overcoming Limitations (ALUo). In several cases, this tool has turned out to be the right tool for the job. In this article, two applications are illustrated where the ALUo was utilized.

The first example began 25,000 feet above Memphis, on my way back from a business trip to Birmingham. I've just spent two days gathering information about what our organization sees as training needs out in the field. As I stare out the window I begin to sort and make sense of what I've heard, not only on this trip but on other trips to other locations. The pad of paper comes out and I begin writing. It isn't until fifteen minutes into this process that I realize the form it has taken. I find myself synthesizing, looking at the common threads, what the organization is presently doing well, not so well, and thinking about next steps. How can we improve our recruitment process? How can we meet the expectations of our employees? How might we communicate information to the field? How can we ensure follow-up from the home office to the field operations? How might we take our training programs from theory to application? While this is not using the CPS method known as Advantages, Limitations, Unique Qualities, and Overcoming Limitations (ALUo) in the strictest sense possible, it is a way of bringing CPS into the real world on a daily basis. Once I have completed this process, I will have the essence of my report, and a suggested action plan, to present in my debrief to management.

"...it is a way of bringing CPS into the real world on a daily basis."

"I wanted the feedback experience to be a positive one providing us a foundation on which to develop an action plan for future training programs."

Often, a method that we have learned, having been given the textbook way to use it, can be creatively applicable to other situations.

Another recent example is a feedback session that I held with my training administrator, Jennifer, regarding her solo facilitation of a program. I wanted the feedback experience to be a positive

one providing us a foundation on which to develop an action plan for future training programs. We began the feedback session with what went well and what we liked, from all aspects of the training program (Advantages). This helped to set the tone for the rest of the discussion. I was insistent that we keep the discussion on target even when the answer from her came back "nothing!" and the inclination was to move into criticism. What Jennifer and I discovered was that there were a large number of things we liked about this particular training program, some were aspects of the group dynamics, but some were a direct result of her facilitation. We then moved into what we did not like, or what we would change (Limitations). We phrased the feedback in the form of "How could...?" and "How might...?" This

was extremely effective in taking a proactive approach to the feedback and initiating our thinking on action steps. How might we better prepare Jennifer to facilitate? How could we continue to hold the session at the home office rather than off-site? How could we involve upper management in the session? and so on. Asking the question "What could be done to make Jennifer more comfortable in front of a group?" is a more positive and proactive approach than saying "Jennifer, you weren't comfortable in front of the group, why?"

From the Advantages and Limitations we moved into what we saw as being unique to this training program and ways to overcome the limitations for continued improvement on the program and Jennifer's facilitation skills. At the conclusion of the time we had allotted ourselves, we looked over what we had developed and found

we had the start of an action plan that we could begin work on. When I met with my director I was able to communicate our action plan along with the logic behind it.

I can not take credit for the idea of using ALUo for feedback. In my previous organization I co-facilitated with Brian Dorval, of CPS-B, on a number of occasions. At the conclusion of each session Brian and I would use ALUo to debrief what we had just done. In the two years that we worked together, I used our debriefing session as a way to improve my skills, both in training and program development. I found the feedback, regarding my performance, easier to hear because we always began with the positives of the program and worked our way through. When forced to think about what is good, it is amazing the number of positive aspects that come to mind. Once that is done, it seems less painful to move into what didn't go as well, but in a way that points to improvement, not just criticism.

Feedback to help improve performance is only effective when the feedback is heard and accepted. Often when we begin a feedback session we find ourselves, as the feedback giver, trying to fumble for words, and the feedback receiver on the defensive. By using the ALUo method, all parties involved have input into the session, making it a two-way rather than one-way communication. By following the prescribed steps and looking at the advantages first, a more

positive tone is set. This in turn begins the foundation for the development of an action plan that includes the ideas and suggestions of all those involved. Today's organizations require continuous improvement in order to remain competitive in the marketplace. I view using ALUo as a tool in that effort.

As a result of using the ALUo, I was able to evaluate the two previous situations in a way that allowed for a number of perspectives. First, the ALUo elicits the advantages (pluses) of a situation, it helps preserve the items that are viewed as positive. Second, when examining the Limitations, the ALUo provides a structure which encourages affirmative judgement (phrasing them in a way in which they can be addressed). Finally, by utilizing the ALUo, I was able to begin development on my action plans.

At the time of writing this article, Leslie Marmor worked for Procter and Gamble. Leslie is currently the Training & Development Manager at Roto-Rooter Services Company based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Having recently completed her Master's degree in Human Resource Development, Leslie is looking to use her knowledge of creative problem solving techniques, creativity and personal style and preferences in the continuous improvement effort at Roto-Rooter. She is certified in both the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory and has completed the CPS-B program on Facilitating Creative Problem Solving.

"Today's organizations require continuous improvement in order to remain competitive in the marketplace. I view using ALUo as a tool in that effort."

Book Review

Mattimore, B. W. (1994). 99% inspiration. New York: American Management Association. ISBN#: 0-8144-7788-7/ 177 pages/ \$ 17.95

Review

I found this book to be a fun divergence from my preferred readings of research, theory, and processes. If you find the need or are asked to give a light presentation on creativity, this book would be an excellent reference and a very good place to start. Although mostly divergent in nature, the author provides the reader with some tools, anecdotes, and techniques that are easily applied into any sessions or environment. Two of the techniques described in the book that I can't wait to try is "The Gray Box Technique" and "The Einstein Strategy." Humor, visioning, risk, fun, paradox, metaphors, and dreaming as relating to creative production are also covered along with some exercises which could be used to stimulate your audience. If you would like to contact Bryan Mattimore, you can leave a message for him on the "Consultants-Mall Message Board" web cite at: <http://www.consultants-mall.com/bryan.htm>.

By Glenn Wilson

The Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory and Shuffleboard? By Lary Faris

Shuffleboard in the Communiqué? That's certainly a surprise. A second surprise is that I'm suggesting that there may be some Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory (KAI) learning in this for you. Here's the story.

The KAI is an instrument designed to help individuals and organizations understand their personal approach to creativity. The instrument does this by examining a person's style or preference to creativity. I've presented "Styles of Creativity" to over 20 groups since my certification by Michael Kirton. In each session I've used an overhead, prepared by Scott Isaksen's Creative Problem Soling Group-Buffalo, that shows the averages of the KAI scores for groups from various pursuits, such as engineers, California bankers, R&D scientists and teachers. While leading these discussions I would often find myself thinking about what his theory would suggest for expert shuffleboard players.

Shuffleboard would pop into my mind because competing in this sport has been my lifetime hobby. I've played it since I was three. I've won National Championships, am in the National Shuffleboard Hall of Fame, and have played in Japan and Africa. I know all the great shufflers of the world. I've observed that the best shufflers are creative but that their creative styles seem somewhat disguised and confusing.

So one day when it rained during a National Shuffleboard Championship tournament, I zipped to my car to get some yellow KAI forms that I had stashed there for just such an opportunity. I returned and handed the forms to 15 of the world's top shuffleboard experts to see how they compared to Kirton's norms (see Figure 1). Of those 15, I identified 9 who were elite even among the experts—the best of the best. I have, for many years, been aware that most folks who pick up a cue and try shuffleboard just don't have shuffle-

board personalities. Despite the fact that these folks enjoy the game and play often, I can predict that they will never become winners—and the predictions are born out time after time. Many get wrapped up in the sport, get competitive, enter tournaments, develop great skills, and try hard to win. But they fail. Time and again, they lose before the semi-finals. But others, who are no better skilled and no more determined, win again and again. This has indicated to me that expert shufflers, the winners, must have some unique personality traits that are somewhat out of the norm.

I've observed that great shufflers have a special spark, an ability to "find a new way to win," and a talent for seeing novel tactical opportunities that others miss. At the same time great shufflers are very disciplined and methodical, often grinding out victories by sticking with determination to fundamental tactics and shooting methods they improve each time they play.

So what does this suggest about KAI scores? On the overall score I was confused be-

cause there seemed to be both innovative and adaptive preferences in the typical shuffleboard expert. This would support Kirton's theory that individuals have styles of creativity rather than levels of creativity. Given this information, I decided to look closer at the KAI subscales. The three subscales involved are Originality (preference to produce original ideas), Efficiency (concern with being thorough and efficient in handling tasks) and Rule Conformity (concern with operating within rules or structures). My going-in notion on two subscales was firm. I was sure that the scores on the Originality (O) subscale would be Innovative and that the scores on the Efficiency (E) subscale would be Adaptive.

I gathered the completed inventories and quickly scored them. Here are the results. On

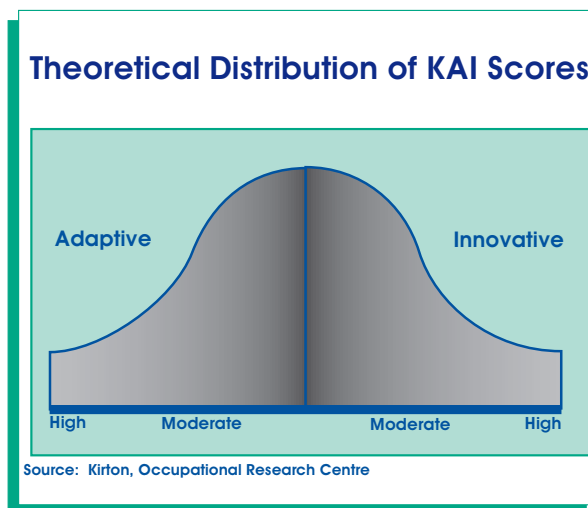


Figure 1. The general distribution of KAI scores with a mean of 96.

the overall KAI, the expert shufflers were close to the norm with a mean of 95.27 and a range of 78 to 121. On the subscales, unique preferences showed up clearly. Against an Originality norm of 39, the experts had a mean of 44.9 with a range of 35 to 55, showing a strong innovative preference. Against an Efficiency norm of 21, the experts had a mean of 16.1 with a range of 8 to 26, showing a strong adaptive preference. On the Rule/conformity scale, the shufflers were close to the norm of 36 with a mean of 34.3 and a range of 21 to 50. As I had expected, the Originality and Efficiency subscales were proving to be the keys to identifying the expert shuffler's uniqueness.

I next looked at the experts whom I had judged were the elite of the experts. The unique preferences in Originality and Efficiency were even more pronounced. For this group, the Originality mean was 48.22 (vs. the 39 norm) with a range of 41 to 55 and the Efficiency mean was 15.2 (vs. a norm of 21) with a range of 8 to 19. Every one of the elite was innovative on the Originality subscale and Adaptive on the Efficiency subscale.

Now scholars will quickly point out a lack of statistical analysis to support my conclusions. I

must admit to being much more an explorer than a researcher. However, I did show my numbers to a Ph.D. in statistics, a faculty member at a large university. He said it passed the "intra-ocular trauma test"—that is the results were so pronounced they "hit you between the eyes." That seemed good enough for me.

What can I do with all this? Well first, I can pass it along to you so that you can perhaps learn from it and get some ideas from it. Second, I can try to use it to win more shuffleboard matches by understanding my opponents, myself, and my partners. Third, I can use it in coaching others on how to play better shuffleboard. Finally, we can all speculate on further applications both in sports and in general.

For me it provides insights into some of the

quirks of the shuffleboard world. For example, shufflers have never promoted their sport well. I don't know for sure what a promoter's KAI subscores would be but I doubt they are at all similar to those of the great shufflers. It would seem that experts shufflers are just not inclined to be promoters and vice-versa. Using another example, I now understand why shufflers have awful conflicts in their organization meetings—expert shufflers are full of innovative ideas (they generate all sorts of ideas) on how to direct tournaments and on organization but at the same time they stubbornly subject each other's ideas to rigorous and methodical evaluations. Major conflicts arise at every meeting (see Figure 2).

While my own KAI is very high on the Originality sub scale, it is not as adaptive as most

of the shuffleboard experts on the Efficiency scale. This provides insight as to why I burn out. I am outstanding at "finding ways to win," proliferating ideas to do that, and often stealing victories at the last minute with a clever and novel finishing tactic. Yet to be a contender, I have to be thorough, methodical, and precise. I can behave

this way but it is not my preference. However, doing so puts me under stress and after too much, I'm no longer up to it. With an awareness of this, I can now manage myself better, doing things like getting away from the courts when I'm not in a game and deliberately using diversions like a movie in the evening instead of more practice or rehashing the day's games.

In regard to application beyond shuffleboard, I think there is big potential for using the KAI in other sports. I doubt there is a unique "sports personality" that the scholars in sports psychology research seem to be looking for. But while there isn't a general overall sports personality, I'm sure there must be styles of creativity peculiar to specific positions or certain roles in specific sports. For example, I believe that the best NFL quarterbacks

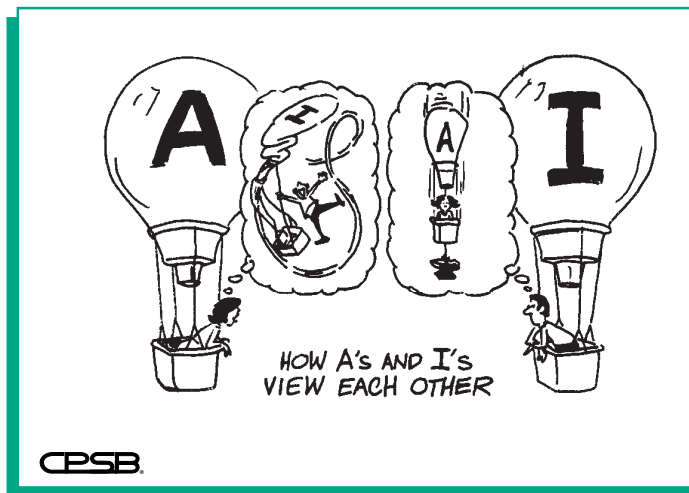


Figure 2. Understanding preferences can often help when individuals interact with each other.

have subscales like the elite shufflers and that it would be a great help if the coaches knew this at draft time and in coaching them. Point guards, third base coaches, and Indianapolis drivers likely have the shuffleboarder's scores while power forwards, golfers, and shortstops likely have something else.

Going beyond sports, I'm sure there are many more applications. I think there are a number of jobs and positions that call for people with the shuffler's KAI. What's your KAI? Do you have a shuffler's subscales? Is there an undiscovered shuffleboard expert lurking inside you? If there is, give the sport a try. On the other hand, if you are

a researcher in creativity and have further interest in my data and findings, let me know. I'd love to shuffle some ideas by you.

Reference

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Lary Faris a is retired employee of Procter & Gamble. Lary is a certified KAI user and he conducts training programs on Creative Problem Solving. Lary can be contacted at: 1414 Fox Hills Drive, Sun City, FL 33573.

Book Review

Amabile, T. M. (1996). *Creativity in context*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
ISBN#: 0-8133-3034-3/ 274 pages/ \$ 23.95

Review

If you're serious about creativity, this book is for you. With over 585 citations, Teresa has truly placed her theory's about creativity "in context." Numerous investigations and research projects into the effect of "social influences" on creativity have led Teresa to the discovery of "synergistic extrinsic motivators" (extrinsic motivators that may actually increase creativity), and to modify her componential model of creativity to include the "influences of social environment on task motivation." A stellar example of the iterative nature of research, i.e., theory-driving-research-driving-theory, etc. If you would like to contact Teresa about this book or others she has written, you may contact her at Harvard Business School, Harvard University, where she is a professor of business administration.

By Glenn Wilson

Understanding And Nurturing Creativity In People:

An International Conference

Sponsored By

The Center for Studies in Creativity (CSC) at Buffalo State College, Buffalo, New York

April 28-30, 1997

The conference will focus on three distinct approaches that help us to more effectively nurture creative strength through a better understanding of: (a) cognitive style; (b) psychological type; and (c) learning styles.

The conference will highlight focused sessions with leading speakers and presenters that will examine research and practice. The conference schedule contains plenty of time for networking and examining resources. There will be extended breaks,

question and answer sessions, keynotes, and a resource material area. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to identify and explore their personal creativity with data from three measures (the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and the Productivity Environment Preference Survey). Qualified professionals will provide feedback in special parallel session. The sessions will begin on April 28, 1997 at 1:15 PM. For details contact the CSC at (716) 878-6223.

CPS-B Headlines

A Working Conference in Creativity

The Creative Problem Solving Group—Buffalo and the Center for Creative Learning have joined together to organize and conduct an invitational colloquium and networking meeting. We envision a working meeting and the establishment of an on-going forum for developing and strengthening a “community of practicing professionals.” The event will take place in Sarasota, Florida on February 19 & 20, 1997. Preceding this event will be an **awareness workshop** taking place at the same location on the 18th of February to provide an introduction to, and overview of, the Creative Problem Solving process. Invitations have gone out and we are already receiving many of them back.

A Welcome to Our New Group Members

CPS-B would like to welcome the following individuals to our growing community of Group Members: Lisa Timko, an elementary school teacher in the Williamsville School District; Paula Normanton, John Rees, Paul Wright, Allan Brooks, Emer Wynne, Andy Wilkins and Steve Hirst from Bull Information Systems, UK; Frank Milton and Alan Arnet of Coopers & Lybrand, UK; and Dr. Ken McCluskey from the Human Resource Centre, Winnipeg. CPS-B Group Members are individuals who have built a relationship with CPS-B through application or research. We are excited about the development opportunities to come.

CPS-B would also like to welcome Keith Kaminski and Mathew Walter to our team. Keith and Matt are both students in the minor program at the Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College and have joined CPS-B as Program and Research Assistants.

Celebrating 30 Years of Contribution

On Sunday, April 27, 1997, the Center for Studies in Creativity (CSC) Alumni will sponsor a gala endowment Fund dinner and activities to celebrate CSC's 30th anniversary. Endowment contributors will be honored. The event will be creative-tie complete with dinner, dancing, networking and other activities. For more information contact Sue Keller-Mathers at the CSC ([716] 878-6223).

Surpassed 10,000 Entry Mark

For several years now, CPS-B has been using the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory in a number of business, education and not-for-profit contexts pertaining to CPS. A recent survey of the data-base has revealed that we currently hold over 11,000 people in our system. That's a lot of data. Our Director of Research, Ken Lauer, indicates that the data-base is continuing to grow.

CPS-B Has Internet Presence

The 21st century is almost upon us and technology is moving at an incredibly rapid pace. Mankind has discovered numerous mediums for communication. Hence the World Wide Web. Many companies have invested thousands of dollars in internet resources. We have not gone that far, but were pretty proud of our home page, so look us up! Check the last page in this issue of the Communiqué for our home page address and email address. We'll do our best to respond to you. Some of you may have noticed some difficulties with the email address in the preceding Communiqué; rest assured, we have taken extra care to provide you with the correct email address in this issue.

The Creative Problem Solving Group-Buffalo: A Five-Year Progress Report on Programs & Services by K. Brian Dorval & Keith Kaminski

The Creative Problem Solving Group-Buffalo (CPS-B) is a leader in the field of creativity research, development, and dissemination. CPS-B was originally established by Scott Isaksen as SGI & Associates in 1982. Its purpose was to enhance the creative productivity of individuals and groups by linking sound theoretical principles and highly effective practice. As president of SGI & Associates and Director of the Center for Studies in Creativity, Buffalo State College, Scott developed a wide variety of productive working relationships with practicing professionals and creativity scholars in business and educational settings around the world.

SGI & Associates changed its name in 1991 to CPS-B to better reflect the focus of the group on CPS and to meet the increasing demands for professional services in research-based programs on creativity. Today, CPS-B is an international assembly of more than 25 professional facilitators, trainers, researchers, and educators who use Creative Problem Solving (CPS) as a common framework to help clients understand, plan for, and manage productive change. We have an extensive basic and applied research mission which keeps our information, products, and services current and on the cutting edge. The purpose of this article is to share the results of our programs and services database analysis as we look back on the progress CPS-B has made over the past five of our fourteen-year history. Specifically, it will share information about the level and kind of program and service activities we have been engaged in to meet our customers needs.

What kinds of programs and services have our clients asked for over the past five years?

Over the past five years, our clients have asked us to support them in a wide variety of ways. We have conducted 280 program and service activities of over 20 different types. As indicated in Figure 1, over 50% of our program and service activities were presentations and workshops designed to get large numbers of people excited about understanding creativity, change, and other related topics. They also developed basic awareness of personal preferences for creativity,

decision making and problem solving, as well as examined the organizational climate for creativity and change and what might be done to understand, assess, and improve it. They included among others: Understanding the Full Spec-

trum of Creative Talent (delivered 54 times), Approaches to Systemic Creativity and Change (delivered 30 times), Climate for Creativity and Change (delivered 30 times).

About 40% of our total programs and services activities focused on the planning and delivery of training for creativity, problem-solving and decision-making skills development. The most frequently delivered program (over 40) was our Foundations of Creative Problem Solving which provided participants with the foundational language and tools to effectively deal with day-to-day problems and opportunities. The second most frequently delivered training program

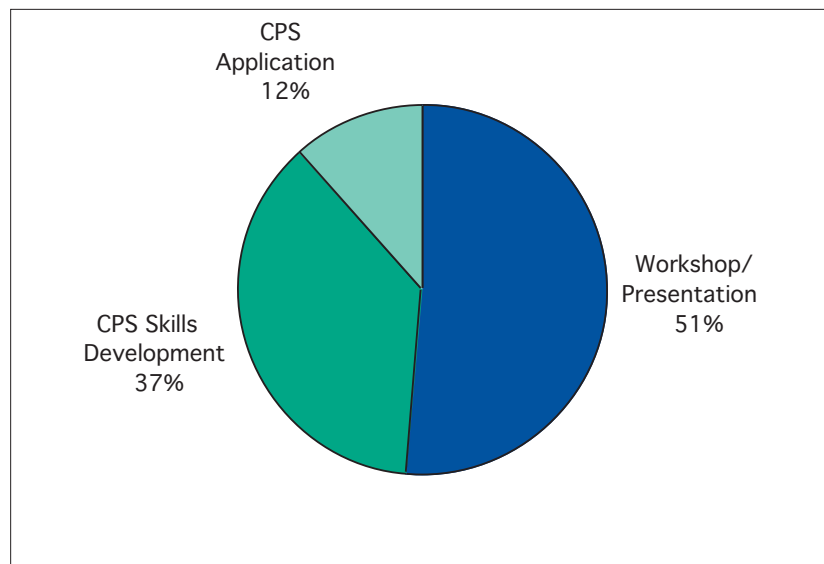


Figure 1: Categories of Programs Offered Between 1992-1996.

was our Facilitating CPS program which provided facilitation skills to enhance the creative productivity of small groups and was delivered on 37 separate occasions. This program also provided foundational language and tools of CPS as well as actual practice and feedback on facilitation performance.

Over fifteen CPS skills-based programs and services focused on transferring advanced skills which enabled organizations to be self-sufficient in providing high-quality CPS facilitation and training. They included our CPS Facilitator Certification program as well as our Trainer-the-trainer: Foundations and Train-the-trainer: Facilitator Development programs.

About 12% of our programs and services helped our clients get real business results on important and challenging tasks. We teamed up with individuals from within these organizations to apply our CPS facilitation skills to work on important topics such as:

- creating strategic and shared organizational vision;
- establishing productive working climates for creativity and change;
- developing new product concepts and exploratory consumer research methods for "leap-frogging" ahead of the competition;
- improving customer satisfaction;
- developing effective leadership practices which support creativity and change;
- improving business processes;
- establishing cross-functional/cultural teams; and

- re-capitalizing major business segments.

Who have we been working with?

During the past five years, we have had the delightful opportunity to work with over 80 different clients (from different groups and organizations) and reached more than 11,500 people in nine different countries. As shown in Figure 2, most of our clients were from the business sector (over 60%), many of which were large, complex Fortune 500 organizations who had challenges with planning and managing productive change. About one quarter were from educational settings, and the remainder from government and public-service settings.

The number of programs we delivered in our top business types include: Consumer Goods

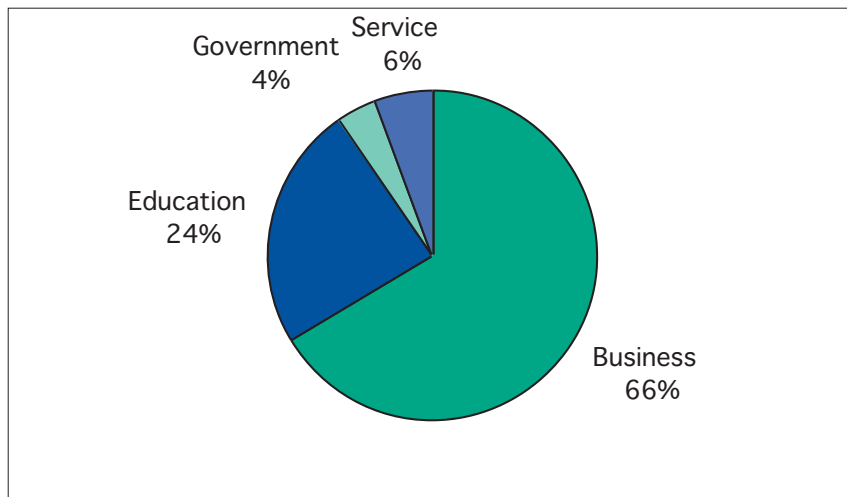


Figure 2: The types of organizations worked with from 1992-1996.

(152), Computers (42), Petroleum Products (15), Banking/Finance (9). Within the educational community, we worked with college presidents, planning committees, and special task forces.

How has our work been received?

There are a variety of ways to know how your work is perceived by others. We engage in a deliberate and continual process of collecting and responding to feedback on our programs and services. We use the feedback collected to improve our understanding and application of creativity and CPS. The feedback also helps drive our research and development activities, which in turn increase the quality and effectiveness of our programs and services. This cycle results in the continuous improvement of our ability to meet our customers' needs.

One way to collect feedback is to use participant feedback forms to understand par-

ticipants' perceptions of the program upon its completion. We collected such feedback using on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The feedback focused on perceptions of programs meeting expectations, the quality of the delivery teams, and quality of program materials. The overall average rating for our programs and services during the past five years is 4.63.

Other ways to collect feedback range from having informal conversations with people before, during or after events to conducting formal research activities months later to systematically investigate and understand the specific perceptions and impact of a program. In the past five years, we conducted, supported, or are in the process of completing, nine comprehensive studies on the impact of our CPS training and application. The status of such research projects will be shared in a later volume of the Communiqué. However, many people trained have shared stories with us about the success, impact and challenges associated with their facilitation and application of CPS. Success stories range from running meetings in a way that double and triple their productivity in half the time to creating entirely new businesses which bring in tens of millions of dollars a year.

However, one of the best ways to know how your work is perceived is to see how often clients invite you back. Of our 83 clients, forty percent asked us back to support their organization at least 2 times, sixteen percent asked us back at least 5 times. In most of these cases, returning to the organization meant helping them develop the internal skills to train or apply CPS to the quality level of CPS-B group members.

What is the past five years telling us?

Maintaining a database on program and service activities can take a large amount of energy and resources. However, have such a database also allows us to learn much about our clients and their needs, as well as how to best predict and meet them. The following are some of the insights we have had from looking back over the past five years of program and service activities and understanding the nature of the

programs and services we were asked to provided.

The need for creativity, decision-making and problem-solving skills is not limited to any one area of business or education. Although the clients we worked with were from particular parts within an organization, business and educational, no one area or function has exclusive rights on creativity. The people who invite us in to do work often come from those functions that were "supposed to be creative" (e.g., Research & Development, Marketing, Strategic Planning and Special Task forces, etc.). However, the events we provided often contained participants from a wide variety of functions within and across organizations. When asked for feedback about where their would apply the training, participants told us in a very wide variety of functions and activities, personally and professionally.

It seems apparent that perceptions about whether or not an organizational function "should"

be creative influence who we (a creativity organization) are most likely to work with. There are also some interesting trends related to the personality types of the people who have a desire and willingness to invite us in for creativity training or application. This phenomenon

will be examined in an article about CPS-B's assessments database appearing in a future Communiqué.

There are common challenges and opportunities faced by people in different contexts. We worked with people from a variety of contexts and functions within the same organization. We also delivered what we call "multiple-client" training programs in which a variety of our clients from a different organizations (business and education) attended the same program to learn about facilitating small-group productivity.

We noticed some interested things take place in both these situations. In large organizations, we noticed that people may work in different functions however share very similar challenges and opportunities. The names of the people and the type of work being conducted may be different, however the issues they face or the opportunities they see often have similar characteristics. For example, what starts out as a technical problem often turns out to be a people problem (i.e., communication, managing personal tensions, etc.).

"In the past five years, we conducted, supported, or are in the process of completing, nine comprehensive studies on the impact of our CPS training and application."

We also noticed in our multiple-client programs that people in business and education have more in common than they initially think. At the start of the five-day programs, we often hear some people from education say that “business people can’t help us solve our problems because they don’t know much about teaching and learning.” Some people in business say, “people in education don’t know about the real world problems we face on a daily basis.” However, after working on each others’ problems for a week, people from business comment about how those from education can actually help them with their “real world” problems. People from education are surprised how much people from business do understand about the teaching and learning situations and can help them with their problems.

Clients value long-term productive working relationships. Our clients are not into developing dependency in a relationship. However, from our experience, they are into developing long-term and productive working relationships. This provides them enough time to develop trust—which often comes with continuity and longevity. It also increases the likelihood of productivity on the more complex, ambiguous and novel challenges. In these situations, it is critical to understand the clients’ unique needs, the personalities of the key players, the climate and culture of the organization, etc.. This often takes time.

It is important to have a full spectrum of tailorable ways to meet client’s needs. Working with a variety of clients over time have helped us see the value in having an explicit and deliberate spectrum of approaches to meeting our clients’ needs. Although clients’ needs may appear similar on the surface, their situations are typically unique in some way—whether it is the personalities of the people, the characteristics of their situation, their desired outcomes, or the willingness they have to invest in deliberate processes. It is important to have a spectrum of methods, but the methods need to be tailorable to the specific and unique situation of each client.

As a result, we have developed Task Appraisal, which is a needs assessment method that we use to understand and diagnose the needs of a client and recommend an approach for meeting the needs. During our programs, we respond to on-going feedback collected. And at the end of each event, we engage in explicit program debriefing in which we examine the program to learn ways to better tailor its application. This level of emphasis on learning enables us to improve our

capacity to understand and meet the needs of our present and future clients.

We can predict the kinds of needs our clients will have and how we might respond to them. After delivering 280 programs in five years, it is possible for us to see clear patterns emerge regarding the kinds of needs for which clients request our support. By taking the time to keep our database complete and up-to-date, we improve our ability to understand and predict the kinds of needs our clients might have. It also enables us to store and use key insights and learnings from previous programs to improve the planning and delivery of future events. Knowing that needs change over time, we can predict in the near future that our clients will have the following types of needs and how we might plan to meet them:

Developing Awareness and Understanding of Creativity - Our clients will need to be more explicit and planful about their management of creativity resources. Therefore, they will need to develop large-scale interest and awareness of approaches to understanding and nurturing creativity for managing the complex, ambiguous and novel changes they will be facing in the future. We can respond to this type of need with the following types of workshops and presentations:

- Understanding the Spectrum of Creative Talent - Provides insights into personal approaches to creativity, decision making and problem solving and their implications for personal and group productivity.

- Understanding Systemic Creativity and Change - Creates awareness and understanding of the key factors associated with taking a systemic approach to planning and managing and change.

- The Climate for Creativity and Change - Creates general awareness of the characteristics of a working climate that supports creative productivity and change.

Developing Creative Problem Solving Skills - Clients will need to develop specific skills for better accessing the creativity, decision making and problem-solving capacity of individuals and groups. The following programs and services will help our clients develop these skills:

- Foundations of CPS - Provides simple-to-use lan-

guage and tools for creatively solving day-to-day problems, and taking advantages of promising opportunities.

-Facilitating CPS - Provides a simple language, portable and flexible framework, powerful set of tools and practice using them, for managing increased levels of small-group creative productivity.

-Tools for Leadership and Change - Provides a problem-solving framework and set of tools for increasing the effectiveness of leadership aimed at making change.

Working Real Business Issues - Clients will need access to existing information and skills to help them work through important and challenging issues. In situations like these, we will use our CPS facilitation skills and assessments to help make significant progress on organizational challenges and opportunities including:

-Developing Organizational Climate for Creativity and Change - Provides specific feedback about the readiness of a climate to support creativity and change and results in specific suggestions for improving the climate.

-Building Effective Cross-Functional/Cultural Teams - Provides a common language and set of tools to help diverse teams function more effectively across functions and cultures.

-Creating Strategic Vision - Helps leadership teams develop and communicate a shared vision in a way that moves organizations to a more productive future.

-Improving Customer Satisfaction - Provides the tools and framework to help organizations effectively develop strategies and approaches for improving customer satisfaction.

-Developing New Product Concepts - Stimulates Research and Development activities to create concepts which help organizations "leap frog" ahead of the competition.

-Improving Existing Change Initiatives - Provides the impetus to increase the effectiveness of existing organizational change initiatives.

Our purpose for writing this article was to share a progress report on the Creative Problem Solving Group - Buffalo's program and service activities. We provided some information about the kind of programs most frequently requested, the type of organizations requesting our services, and some general feedback about how the programs were received. We also provided some preliminary suggestions for what we might learn by looking back over the past five years. If you have any questions about the contents of this article, please do not hesitate to contact either one of us.

Book Review

Millar, G. W. (1995). E. Paul Torrance: "The creativity man." Norwood, NJ: Ablex Pub. Corp. ISBN#: 1-56750-166-4/ 373 pages/ \$24.50

Review:

With this book, Garnet Millar has provided the world the rarest and greatest of treasures, an in-depth and personal view into the life and times of E. Paul Torrance, a man who has truly dedicated his life to one endeavor- the identification and enhancement of creative human potential. In the book, insights into the basis of and rationale for some of Torrance's most popular press books (i.e., The Incubation Model of Teaching and the Search for Satori, etc.) and his "Manifesto For Children" are provided. Folks, this book is about creativity, its about a journey, but most of all its about love. A reading so complete I have found a new friend, and his name is E. Paul Torrance. When you read the book, I'm sure you will feel the same way too! Although E. Paul Torrance is retired, the Torrance Center for Creative Studies continues his research and instructional programs. For more information about the center you can visit their web page at: <http://www.uga.edu/rcisp/tcfc.htm>.

by Glenn Wilson

Learn Skills for Managing Change

Facilitating CPS is a training program which provides individuals with skills to manage small groups using Creative Problem Solving (CPS). CPS is a portable and flexible change process containing over a dozen simple tools and an easy-to-use language. It stems from over 50 years of experience with problem solving and change management and has been proven effective through research, practical application and continuous improvement.

During the program, you will learn to:

- Use CPS process, language, and tools to identify problems, generate alternatives and transform possible solutions into action.
- Diagnose the needs of a situation and use CPS to productively focus a group's energy toward a shared purpose.

Facilitating CPS is offered as a public program or as a tailored, in-house program designed to meet your specific needs.

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
What is CPS? Conceptions and Styles of Creativity	CPS Language and Tools	Leadership and CPS	CPS Facilitation Practice and Feedback Sessions	CPS Facilitation Practice and Feedback Sessions
CPS Guidelines CPS Language and Tools		Planning to Facilitate CPS		Taking CPS Forward

CPS-B 1996-97 Program Registration Form

Name: _____ Title: _____
 Organization: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Please the program(s) you wish to attend:

Facilitating CPS, Buffalo, NY \$1,650.00 <input type="checkbox"/> April 14-18, 1997 <input type="checkbox"/> August 4-8, 1997 <input type="checkbox"/> November 3-7, 1997	CPS Awareness Workshop, Sarasota, FL \$95.00 <input type="checkbox"/> February 18, 1997
	Facilitating CPS, Bokrijk, Belgium \$2009.00 <input type="checkbox"/> May 23-27, 1997

Registration Fee: Registration fee (**must be received four weeks prior to program date**) includes materials, continental breakfast and lunch during the program. Participants are responsible for all other expenses including lodging and travel. **Cancellation policy:** Cancellation fees are: 10% - if notified up to thirty business days prior to program; 30% - if notified between ten and thirty business days prior to program. If notified within ten business days prior to program, registration will be transferred to a future scheduled course (minus a 20% processing fee).

Please payment method (**Registration confirmed upon receipt of payment**):

- Check here if you would like a receipt.
- Check Enclosed. Amount: _____. Make check payable (in US funds, drawn on a US Bank) to **CPS-B** and send to: Marves Isaksen, CPS-B, 1325 North Forest Road, Suite F-340, Williamsville, NY 14221; USA, or fax to: 716-689-6441.
- Please send an invoice to the attention of: _____ at the following address: _____



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About the Communiqué

The Communiqué is an informal newsletter occasionally published by the Creative Problem Solving Group - Buffalo. It is designed to highlight and share key information about current development, research and program activities taking place at CPS-B, or with one of its group members.

If group members are interested in submitting a short article, Headline or Calendar information, please contact Bradley Lewandowski at:

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