

TIME WELL SPENT

By Barbara Babij

*An invite we received one day in the mail,
To gain some new insights, to follow a trail.*

*Where was this place, what would it be?
I'd heard it was located next to the sea.*

*Who would be at this professional tryst?
Name after name appeared on the list.*

*Together we'd spend nearly a week,
We came from all over, for learning we'd seek.*

*Our expectations were high!
For the sky we would try!*

*Creativity skills we'd really enhance,
And after that time, we'd be wiser
perchance.*

The place was Sarasota, Florida; the date, February 11-13; 25 people representing seven different countries, at a conference. No longer "lone wolves," we wanted to learn, to share experiences, and enrich our skills as facilitators and creativity professionals. As the conference progressed, three motifs emerged: the task appraisal model and facilitation; keynotes; and special interest groups on tools, alternative methods to CPS and the impact of CPS on an organization. All in all, the three days were informative and uplifting. Some highlights follow.

Task Appraisal and Facilitation

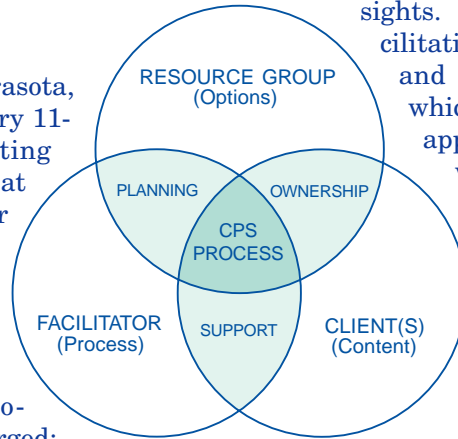
The purpose of this theme was to provide an in-depth look at CPS, particularly task appraisal, process planning, session planning and facilitation. Practice sessions

afforded participants this opportunity.

The large group divided into two smaller groups, each facilitated by a team of two, one of which was cross-cultural. Each group focused on a different task statement:

- Locate building blocks for impactful systemic interventions; and
- Identify the highest leverage intervention programs for senior management to enable improvement in innovation.

The facilitation was the vehicle used to practice skills and gain some new insights. The desired outcome of the facilitation is derived from the client and the nature of the clientship which is determined during task appraisal. It is task appraisal which sets the tone for the intervention and can be used to develop a creative climate. Clarity on the part of the client is critical in defining the problem and moving forward. Involving the resource group in task appraisal improves the sessions and decreases time in data finding. In



Model for CPS Facilitation

"Someone once said that for every problem there is a solution that is simple, attractive ...and wrong"

-Arthur C. Clarke

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addition, co-facilitating adds layers of complexity to the process. Facilitators need to consider cultural and style differences as well as different cognitive thought patterns. And how do you know if the task appraisal was successful? The client will have novel insights into the task.

Keynotes

Throughout the three days, we were privileged to have various participants share their experiences; among them were Ruth Noller and Don Treffinger, the keynote speakers on Wednesday and Thursday nights. Each presentation examined a different perspective of CPS, its use, or its impact and served to stimulate discussion in small groups.

Ruth Noller, Professor Emeritus of Buffalo State College, Center for Studies in Creativity provided us with examples of creative leadership for times of great change, using the mentor-mentee relationship as a paradigm. What is a mentor? A mentor is someone who believes in us and helps us to believe in ourselves; a guide by the side, not a sage on the stage, according to Ruth's preferred definition. Ruth guided us through the changes to the mentoring relationship which have occurred during the last ten years, as well as insights into the nature of the relationship itself. She provided tips for effective mentoring and tips for creating mentoring programs. Ruth concluded by linking mentoring to leadership: mentoring fosters leadership. Scott reinforced Ruth's message in his postscript and left us with the question: Are facilitators capable of being mentors?

Are facilitators capable of being mentors?

Don Treffinger, President of the Center for Creative Learning, Inc., shared his years of experience in unleashing talent in people. "Talent is the potential for significant contributions or productivity (in original or creative ways) in any domain of

inquiry, expression, or action, over an extended period of time. It emerges from aptitudes and/or from sustained involvement and learning in areas of strong interest and passion. It is not simply a natural endowment or a gift." This was the working defini-

Talent is... not simply a natural endowment or a gift.

tion from which Don's talk flowed. By examining the key elements of talent, the characteristics, content, context and outcomes, Don transferred his insights in talent development gained in gifted education to an organizational context. As with gifted education, instead of trying first to identify (and label) "gifted" kids, what would happen if we were to invest our efforts and energies in doing things to give people talent-expanding opportunities?

The definition of talent development in an organizational context hints at the answer to this question. Talent development is "all of the efforts made by the individual, team, group or organization to recognize, nurture and celebrate the many and varied strengths, talents and sustained interests of all personnel." Drawing from his experience in education, Don proposed four levels of service which could be created within organizations to tap into this enormous reserve of potential. The end result of making stars within our midst (rather than identifying and labeling) is a stronger and richer community life with happier and healthier workers. This is surely a benefit worthy of our investment.

Trevor Davis, Service Development Leader, Creativity and Innovation at Coopers & Lybrand in the UK discussed the need to get beyond the "session mindset" and focus on the "big picture." In 1996, Coopers & Lybrand began a comprehensive survey of the CEOs of the Times 1000 group in the UK in an effort to discover what the most innovative companies were doing that their competitors were not. Fourteen months later, the data revealed some surprising results and dispelled some commonly held beliefs.

The research revealed ten characteristics and three capabilities that separated the high performers from the low performers, as well as two different innovation styles. Of the ten characteristics, management trust was rated as most important. As many of the ten characteristics relate to employee

behavior and corporate values, we can conclude that people are key to innovation. The three capabilities

people are key to innovation

required are idea management, climate creation, and the balance between leaders and followers. Innovation styles were identified as either managed (the organization is a mechanism whose future direction is planned based on past performance) or open (the organization is much more fluid and organic). Although both open and managed styles of innovation were being used by successful companies, only the open style was used by the top performers.

Cecilia Pålsson and Samantha Stead of International Masters Publishers (IMP) shared examples of the value added by applying CPS within their organization and explored additional possible outcomes from its continued use. The IMP group consists of 1500 people in twenty countries. Their products consist of card/book/video/CD series, book clubs, encyclopedias and collectibles, all of which are direct marketed. IMP used CPS over a wide range of applications including product development, marketing and organizational change. CPS moved the company from a micro level to a macro level throughout many areas of the organization. CPS impacted their way of working as well as their way of thinking. The benefit to the company was significantly increased sales. CPS continues to be used and has begun to be imbedded in the corporate culture.

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The Kirton Adaption/Innovation Inventory is a measure of cognitive style, the results of which can be applied to managing organizational change. Guido Prato Previde, Director of the KAI Center Italy, explained how. Based on the premise that change is related to people, if one has a good understanding of the people involved (and their preferences for which kind of change), then one has a good start on the management of the change process. Identifying the nature of the relationship between the task and the person is critical in accomplishing

the task. And in any group, it is the mean KAI score of the group which will drive the change effort. The team for a particular change process can be developed depending on the type of change required under given circumstances. A final word of caution - *ethical issues should be considered very carefully when applying the KAI as an instrument of change.*

Getting results was the theme of the last

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presentation by Charlie Prather, President of CW Prather Associates, Inc. Charlie uses a combination of KAI, CPS and whatever else works to obtain results; his method is called Bottom Line Innovation. Charlie begins an intervention by administering the KAI and explaining the language. He prefers to use the terms "better" and "different" for adaptor and innovator. He also incorporates CPS. Charlie's message to us was threefold:

- You must make implementation work first; if implementation doesn't work, idea generation, and thus innovation, will stop.
- Of the nine climate dimensions (as identified in the SOQ), risk-taking, trust/openness, idea time, and idea support are the most crucial.
- Getting the bandit (the lowest person who has the authority to commit) on board is critical to the success of innovation.

Special Interest Groups: Tools, Methods, and Impact

Three groups were formed, based on participants' preference to explore one of these areas further. The purpose of this strand was to take CPS

beyond the Post-Its™ and dots syndrome and beyond the session. “New” tools and variations on “old” tools were presented as a means to expand our toolbox. These included Mindstorming, Like Best/Next Time, and the Binary Matrix. Oh, yes, and just for fun, Blamestorming, sitting around in a group, deciding why a project failed - and who’s responsible.

Several methods were shared by various participants as alternatives or enhancements to CPS. These included Appreciative Inquiry, Evolution as an analogy for change, Value Analysis/Value Engineering and Activity Based Costing. All of these are methods for change. Some focus on cost and function, others on analogy, and others on past successes of participants. What emerged from discussion within the group was a belief that an ecological approach to creativity and change can only help and that sustained, ongoing effort is required for permanent change.

What exactly is the impact of CPS on an

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organization in the short-term as well as over time? By trading experiences which ran the gamut of small, educational institutions to large business organizations, participants in this group attempted to find an answer. Several key insights emerged. Setting the scene, visualizing and dreaming, and a willingness of participants to not get stuck in details are necessary to the process. Another critical element is the need for emotional involvement and the recognition that at the end of the day, people are the resource into which CPS taps. The group proposed that the impact on the client is equally positive regardless of client size or the dollars expended. And finally, the group examined the longitudinal impact of CPS. Although the impact of CPS seemed to decline over time, the group concluded that this was possibly just the normal life cycle of a new skill set as it becomes imbedded in the culture of the organization. What is needed to maintain the change momentum over time is an adjustment to the balance among

leadership, climate and idea management.

Where does this thread lead if followed to its logical conclusion? We know that most leaders in organizations are not responsible for productivity. We know that leadership behavior creates the climate within an organization. What is the link to creative leadership?

...leadership behavior creates the climate within an organization.

*On Wednesday morning Trevor began,
With the need for balance in the corporate plan.*

*To Cecilia and Sam, then the podium beckoned,
They spoke of value added, and how it was reckoned.*

*Using KAI to manage change,
Guido convinced us that this is not strange.*

*Innovator/adaptor were terms Charlie deplored,
Different and better were much less untoward.*

*And one final note from all that was said,
Without the bandit on board, your project is dead.*

*So on Friday at 4:00, our time came to an end,
Back to our lives, our separate ways did we wend.*

*Some questions were answered, while some new ones
remained,
Our expectations were met, a lot we had gained.*

Barbara Babij is President of Barbara J. Babij and Associates, a team of consultants committed to nurturing creativity and developing leadership as a means of achieving creative results within the workplace.

FACILITATING TEAM STRATEGY THROUGH CPS

by Guido Prato Previde

I was recently asked by a client to design and facilitate a strategic team intervention. During the program, I was able to apply the concept of Creative Problem Solving that I learned from my colleagues in Buffalo, and some of the tools related to it. It was a challenging opportunity because of the circumstances under which I was forced to work, and a fascinating experience because of the extraordinary impact the meeting had. The client and her group were so satisfied with the outcome of the meeting that they immediately wanted to make use of the findings for further decisions and actions!

Following is some background information about the application. Some key learnings are also presented.

The client was the Regional President of an important Public Health Care Regional Association employing Italian professionals in the field of nursing. I had already worked for the same Institution setting up and delivering a training program aimed at improving the culture and the skills of a small group of regional managers. The client is now in the position of leading the regional group that is made up of many local administrators managing their smaller organizations in accordance with the central guidelines. She said she has been trying for a long time to empower these people at the level of their local committees. Now was the time to make the key people of these structures more committed to a common goal and accountable for initiatives and actions on their own. The speed of change has accelerated, and the group as a whole must be more effective and consistent.

When she called me she had a precise idea: she wanted to involve the key people who manage the local committees of the association. Everyone should have time to debate productively about the actual situation and future orientations. She also said that it was important to motivate these people to articulate their opinions. It was therefore necessary to create a climate of trust and open communication. As far as I could understand after a first task appraisal interview by phone, she was thinking about a 1/2 day

conference, or training session, for her key managers (30 people out of 90).

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I immediately asked for more information about the historical background of the organization, the momentum, people's roles, main weaknesses, vision and mission. As I saw it, it was becoming clear that there was the need for some process consultation (French, Bell, 1995; Schein, 1987) to produce ideas and share consensus around strategic issues.

The association was founded in 1954 and is a large one, but now it risks becoming old-fashioned and bureaucratic. It needed to undergo a renewal process in order to be closer to the great number of associates and to influence them, and to be able to cope with the changing environment. Moreover, the role of these managers and their commitment to change was

crucial. The leader of the group, who was my client, has tried many times to involve these people during formal settings, but the results were unproductive. Now, as the President of the group, she wanted to make a concrete change and strengthen the group, reinforcing her leadership.

When I matched my first conclusions with those of the client, it became clear that the aim of the



meeting was both motivational and strategic, where the main part of the system had to be brought together in the meeting. They had to work together, analyzing and processing information about mission and vision, generating ideas and sharing priorities in order to make “a jump” both as individuals and as a group.

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To meet the task at hand, I decided to use CPS tools within a 3/4 day meeting (from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., including an hour and half break for lunch). I decided that I might combine a group facilitation experience with some training, in accordance with the expectations of my client.

In the meanwhile, I had the opportunity to develop more learning on CPS during my second course in Buffalo. I was also able to discuss my plan with Brian Dorval who helped me a great deal by giving suggestions and tips for the success of my initiative. At the same time, I received the confirmation that this meeting could be managed successfully through CPS methodology when task appraisal gives such results. It would be productive to use the method and the tools, because the job was a new one with a group who was supposed to take the lead in a changing environment, where strategic issues had to be openly and creatively identified and shared. From the process planning perspective, it seemed to me that the right way to act was entering the Problem Solving process at the first component (“understanding the problem”). It sounded like a “strategic problem finding session” where creativity is very much welcome!

I prepared to work with a group made up of about 30 people, where I would be the only facilitator in the classroom. I structured the meeting tightly and designed the agenda, taking into account all the elements I had. The tool for generation was Brainstorming with Post-Its™, while Highlighting and Hits would be used for focusing, both at a small group level and in the large group (Isaksen, Dorval, Treffinger, 1994). I planned to let the 3 sub-

groups work in the same large classroom (about 10 people in each group). I was to act as a “cadre” facilitator. Being that it was impossible to have other colleagues assist me, I had to call for three self-selected table facilitators at the beginning of the meeting, briefing them during a short break.

The expected outcome of the creative meeting was to get 4 to 6 relevant and shared “problems” on which to focus further work in order to improve the group’s effectiveness and success. The planned statement read: “WIBNI we were able to optimize the strength of our group?”

I had to manage the whole process in a very structured way, keeping the large group together during common briefings for instructions and guidelines, while dividing them into small groups when generating and focusing. At each stage, table facilitators would present their group’s results and share the experience, while the client was out of the small group activities. After the generating phase, they would have to restate the crucial topics, and organize and prioritize them within their small groups. In the end, after a clarification phase where the subgroup’s spokesperson illustrated the meaning and the content of the identified priorities, the whole group was going to vote. Voting at the whole group level was aimed at getting two different perspectives: the first related to perceived organizational priorities (on an SML basis), the second related to a declared individual preference for one area where individuals were willing to contribute personally.

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Unfortunately...***

Everything was ready for the large meeting and I felt safe enough. Unfortunately, before the meeting, I had to cope with a couple of unscheduled events. It became impossible to brief the client personally before the meeting because, even though the date had been anticipated, the client acquired an important duty for the association. When I was finally able to develop some briefing by phone, a couple days before the meeting, she told me that the

number of the participants would be 70 people! The program was so appealing that the client wanted to let all the managers and their direct staff into the class. I did not change the structure, but I had to conduct the small group activities differently. Now we would have to create at least six groups for generating and focusing and I was still the only facilitator. I chose to spend more time explaining roles and responsibilities before the creative session, so as to let participants know the required skills and facilitate correct self-selection.

Although it was a hard job, the meeting went well. After a short opening where the client articulated her expectations about the day and her vision of the future, I gave a short lecture on the management of change and leadership roles. It was an interactive session and it served as an ice-breaker. The result was that participants' attention increased. They were asked to reflect on how their contribution might be valuable at this stage for their organization. Then I went back to the client's words and better explained the meaning of the day and the agenda. It was then easy to write down the key background on a large whiteboard, where information about history, mission and vision statements, crucial challenges and roles was located. I checked with the client, and then started the scheduled session. At the end of the Creative Problem Solving session, I gave my debrief, including a short explanation about the concepts and tools. This was my first facilitation experience with a very large group applying CPS, and I could not believe, it was okay!

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The meeting, of course, absorbed a lot of effort, but the outcome was very productive and enjoyable. It provided a lot of information that I have packed into a report for the client to share with the resource group. I know they have worked on that and approved further actions.

In accordance with this experience I

brought away some key learnings. First, CPS concepts and tools are powerful when used appropriately. Task appraisal is fundamental to explore the objectives with the client and to focus the starting point. Process planning and tools selection must be prepared and developed with a clear objective (task statement and the invitational stem should be challenged and tested with your client before working with them). The more complex the group environment is, the more you have to make use of structure (phases and time, small group activities and large group activities). Flexibility, which was a key success factor for the meeting, is possible if the facilitator has a clear picture of what should happen and manages the process in a structured way. I cannot believe I had 70 people in the classroom and all of them contributed and felt at ease. Last, but not least, the report I wrote,

I had 70 people in the classroom and all of them contributed and felt at ease.

containing both the background and the results, has been very much appreciated and it was really useful as a document for further work within the group.

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CPS-B NEW PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS



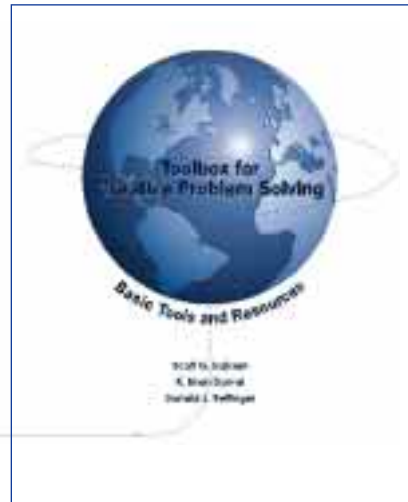
Are you a creativity professional who is looking for a quick and attractive way to remind yourself and visitors to your office of the importance of creativity? A person in an organization who wants to send a message of the importance of creativity? Or perhaps you are a global company searching for a way to illustrate how creativity is a link for your cross-cultural work.

CPS-B has created a product which can do all of these things and many more. "The Creativity as a Fundamental Human Resource" poster is a full color poster which conveys creativity as an integral part of the organizational world. The poster is 21" by 26" and is an attractive addition to any office or meeting room. The word creativity is written in thirteen different languages and adorns a likeness of the globe on a black background. The poster is completed by a beige border and has this caption at the bottom: "The Fundamental Human Resource."

To Order The Creativity as a Fundamental Human Resource poster, please send \$14.95 per poster plus \$3.95 shipping and handling each, along with your name, mailing address, and phone and fax information to:

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1325 North Forest Road
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Williamsville, NY 14221

OR: Call Keith at (716) 689-2176



Are you looking for a handy, high quality and professional resource which contains easy to read explanations of the most versatile set of CPS tools in the marketplace?

The Toolbox for Creative Problem Solving is that valuable resource. The Toolbox was created by veteran writers Scott G. Isaksen, K. Brian Dorval and Donald J. Treffinger. This product was designed to introduce the CPS tools to a group, but can also be used by an individual. It serves as a great summary of the most popular tools used to facilitate the CPS process. This wonderful resource comes in a durable, canvas covered three-ring binder.

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LEARNING IS CHANGING

By Helena Gil da Costa

At the exact moment I began to write this article, I became aware that a little more than nine months have gone by since I was in Buffalo for the very first time to attend the Facilitating Creative Problem Solving (CPS) program. I find it rather curious that I have needed exactly this symbolic period of time to come to this situation, concerning the learning and practice of the Creative Problem Solving Process, which this article is about.

As anyone who has attended a Facilitating CPS Program organized by the Creative Problem Solving Group - Buffalo (CPS-B) knows, at the end of “day five,” the facilitator team uses the following, among other things, to promote clarity:

- 1st - each participant prepares a personal practice plan of short, medium or long term goals of every learning carried out;
- 2nd - experience shows that 15 days (at the most) after the program, every learning carried out should be tested, otherwise we may lose it partially or completely.

When I was confronted with this situation, I was also facing the consequences of a week full of new things, experiences, projects and dreams built from there. In addition, I was dealing with the “weight” of a program spoken in a language that was not my own and which I couldn’t master completely. That situation made me wonder: “How could I begin to use CPS with all its specific language if, when I come back home, I’ll have to do it in Portuguese?” To my questions, “What are we doing in Portugal?” or “What can you give me in Portuguese?”, the answers were “We don’t know,” or “Nothing.” This meant that, before participating in the program, I had never had any contact in my country with a similar experience. We didn’t expect there would be a change and, although I would have complete support from CPS-B, I’d have to start working on my own in Portugal and in Portuguese.

Therefore, after the “incubation period,” I

needed to organize the ideas and to find the necessary nerve and strength for the undertaking of an integration task. This task is far from its end and has been rather complex and detailed. I picked up all the information and materials and was able to make them comprehensible and workable in my own culture and language.

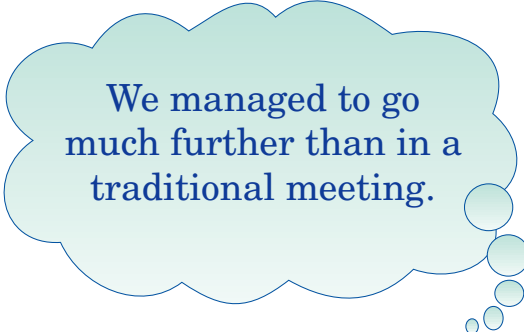
Two months later, although I was still in the beginning of my learning, I facilitated my very first CPS session. This was due to the fact that this methodology allows an efficient result even if the process, tools and techniques are not yet completely mastered.

In a school in Oporto, with children from 2 to 7 years old, the teachers’ team wanted to organize a special and week-long program to celebrate the beginning of Spring for their children, families, surrounding community and, of course, the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school.

The name for this program had already been chosen - Festa da Vida (Life Celebration). Despite the desire to create something new, all the ideas they had come up with to that point were very close to what had traditionally been done in Portuguese schools. Due to this fact, the School Master and the kindergarten teacher responsible for the project coordination, having known that there was “some process” or “something new” that might help their team with the program conception, asked for my cooperation.

I did the task appraisal rather easily, since I understand their work quite well, which allowed me to be sensitive and understand the interactions and synergies implied. Regarding the formation of the resource group, it was agreed that, besides consisting of the school team, it should also include a member from outside, as well as (and this was the difference) 3 children 6 to 7 years old who would be assisted by the kindergarten teachers whenever reading or writing was needed.

Besides that, and for continuity reasons which had to do with former actions, the session would occur on the same schedule as other traditional school meetings and would last the same 90 minutes. So, to “stand the trial,” I would have to



We managed to go much further than in a traditional meeting.

prove to the group and to myself how much, as a group in a CPS session, we would be able to increase the team's productivity, motivation and efficiency. Along with all that, it would need to introduce higher quality, innovation and success components in that project (which besides being a challenge and done with a different shape would also mean extra work).

Rather excited, but also with great expectations (since we were all fulfilling and assuming new and very specific roles and responsibilities), the session took place the following week. During the 90 minutes, we worked very hard. As tools, we used Brainstorming with Post-Its™, VIR, Selecting Hits and Highlighting. Believe it or not, the presence of the 3 children was crucial. The adult group, which

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was confronted with this methodology for the first time, experienced an initial period of some hesitation, even some insecurity, which needed to be unblocked. However, for the children, the CPS procedure was so natural to them that, without doubt, we owe to them the "newest and freshest" ideas which came out that day.

The session was not perfect. On my part I have to grow and improve the expertise of this process. However, and this information results from the group feedback at the end of the session, we did pass the test as we managed to go much further than in a traditional meeting. We would have needed several meetings to reach the same level considering the quantity of ideas produced (independent from the quality).

Since then, I've been following the school activities, preparation of Festa da Vida and during

I've been able to perceive the consequences that the use of the CPS process has been having in the life of this community.

the day itself (March 21st), when I had the chance to be there and see a group of exhausted, but happy teachers accompany more than a hundred kids, most of them with their parents or relatives, turning the school upside down. Perhaps even more interesting than checking the immediate results of their project, are the changes I have seen in the life of this community. These results include:

- More cohesion in the working team;
- More courage and imagination on creating new and different projects because they have realized that, after all, it is possible to do much more and go much further than what is settled by routine; and
- The use of the divergent and convergent thinking guidelines more and more spontaneously in different working situations although not included in the CPS process.

As I had the opportunity to say when I started this article, nine months have gone by since I was in Buffalo for the first time and I know that the "child" who began to grow since then still has a lot to learn. The situation where I stand now regarding the application of CPS methodology and considering its flexibility is being able to develop through the accomplishment of the following projects or situations:

- Practice of some CPS tools during the classes of Education and Creativity in the training course for kindergarten teachers;
- Voluntary formation of a group of students in the kindergarten teachers' course so that, on a regular basis during 97 - 98, they can work with CPS in tasks within their interest and responsibility;
- Application of the ALUo during the work with the students, namely in reflection and debriefing occasions about their teaching practice;
- Making known the CPS process so that more schools and different organizations in Portugal can realize how much they can learn from CPS.

I met Scott Isaksen a little more than two years ago in Santiago de Compostela (Spain). Since that time, I have had the chance to know and work with

other members of the CPS-B team, namely Brian Dorval, Ken Lauer and Brad Lewandowski. With all that, I have come to know a group of people who do more than a great work. They carry out a mission which makes the difference because it is a real Mission.

Bibliographical References

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Helena Gil da Costa is the Director of the "Perspectivar Educação" newsletter published by Escola Superior de Educação Santa Maria. Helena also participates in several lecturing activities at Escola Superior de Educação Santa Maria.

CPS FACILITATION TIPS

The following is a selection of CPS facilitation tips that were developed from key insights presented during the *Advanced Facilitation Course* held this February in Sarasota, Florida. They stem from discussions 20 advanced CPS practitioners had during the three day course.

(We are planning to include a column of tips for CPS facilitation in each future Communiqué. If you would like to contribute to this column from your personal experience, please feel free to email your contributions to: cpsb@cpsb.com. Please include your name and a short biographical sketch so that we can credit you in the column. Please limit the amount of information to 100 words or 10 tips.)

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Make sure the process you plan serves the needs of the client.
- Task Appraisal is key to clarifying client's needs and wants. Make sure your Task Appraisal is comprehensive and complete.
- Checking in with your client is essential. Be sure to do so each step of the process. Otherwise, process lives for its own sake and becomes less effective.
- Keep the energy high in the group. This does not mean only physical energy. It might also mean emotional and cognitive energy.
- Be sure to clarify roles early on and avoid false expectations. If you are coming in as a context expert, clarify that up front. If you are taking on the role of facilitator, then clarify that.
- Keep the separation between content and process clear. It is possible to try and balance both, however, it can be very difficult. You might be better off just separating them and keeping them distinct.
- Keep in mind the interaction between client and facilitator. This is the primary relationship when using CPS with more than one person.
- Connect the group's energy to the tasks at hand. Find strategies that channel peoples' energy, not control it.
- Vary the use of the tools. Some tools are common knowledge and may become boring. Some tasks may require multiple tools, so have options available.
- Remember to use brainstorming enhancers to stimulate generation.
- Take care in managing the transition to a new tool. Have a plan for making transitions. Be purposeful in each transition.
- Reinforce guidelines throughout the session. Guidelines are more than words on paper (or flipchart). They are norms that are used to enhance creative productivity.
- Emphasize the use of stems. Language and thought are linked. The way into a person's mind is through his or her language. Use the stems to help people think.
- Try to manage the time invisibly to the group. Time is neither an assister or resister. Use it to help the group be productive.
- Trust your instincts. If you have experience, then lean on it. If you need experience, get it.

THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF FACILITATING CPS SKILLBASE DEVELOPMENT IN A CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT

By Allan Brooks

This article tells the story of my role as a Training Manager facilitating the skillbase development of a highly skilled core team of CPS practitioners. These practitioners were teaching CPS to employees and also using the process to address real business issues in Bull's Information Systems business in the UK & Ireland. We did this because having trained professionals available who can use CPS methods to address and solve critical business problems is very important to a rapidly changing global IT business.

The purpose of this article is to:

- Tell the story of how a corporate Human Resource Development function played a pivotal role in the skillbase development of a number of CPS facilitators by engaging them in a vision designed to achieve independent accreditation to teach CPS.
- Show how incredibly powerful the CPS process can be when it is facilitated by highly skilled practitioners in a commercial business environment.
- Share key leadership practices that you can emulate to enable your current and potential CPS practitioners to bring real value to your business.

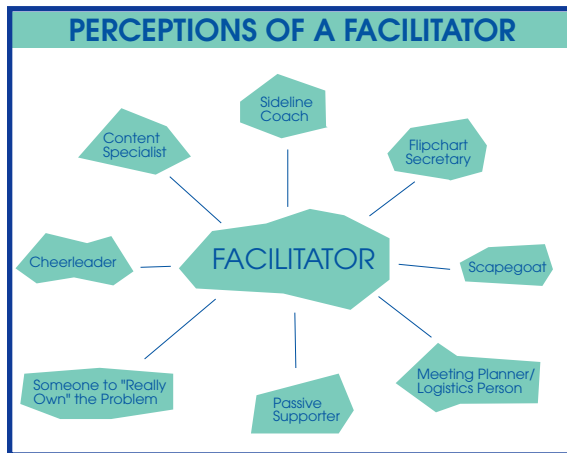
Over a period of 5 years the Bull UK & Ireland business had made considerable material and financial investments in CPS training. In January '97, I invited the Creative Problem Solving Group - Buffalo (CPS-B) to conduct an in-depth impact study to determine what the return on our investment actually was. The study, conducted by Scott Isaksen and Brad Lewandowski, found considerable evidence indicating that the investment made in teaching and using the CPS methodology in the business had been repaid many times over.

Here are two examples taken from the Executive Summary of the Impact study prepared by Scott and Brad:

“In Customer Services, the CPS method and tools were responsible for meeting and exceeding revenue goals of £25 million despite decreasing revenue from traditional sources. In '93, the traditional business accounted for 85% of revenue, in '96, it was only 50%. CPS provided the ways to earn approximately £31.6 million over the four years '93-'96.”

CPS provided the ways to earn approximately £31.6 million over the four years '93-'96.

“Within Bull's INTEGRIS division, CPS was responsible for creating a new business unit (Millennium) which yielded about £10 million in new revenues in '96 and about £20 million in '97. This new business initiative was accepted by Groupe Bull for World Wide application. Millennium was only one of many ideas generated to improve the sales pipeline which is now stronger in all sectors. Improving the sales pipeline was the original target of the CPS session.”



I was a participant in the first course offered to Bull UK and moved to an HR position responsible for all core causes for upper-level management. That meant I had responsibility

for both the Foundations and Facilitation courses.

Prior to my involvement with CPS training, there had been no published strategy or Vision about where we were going with CPS and what the end objectives were. Leading up to the first CPS training session under my sponsorship, I began to formulate a number

of ideas. These ideas began to crystallize in conversations with 3 people in the company who had expressed interest to be more involved in CPS and CPS training. After kicking off the CPS Training course, led by Scott Isaksen & Brian Dorval, I went home with a vision for CPS skillbase development forming in my mind. When I returned to help with the close down and celebration of achievements, I had a draft Vision to discuss with Scott, Brian and the newly formed CPS Core Team.

Our Vision

“To evolve Bull UK & Ireland’s relationship with CPS-B over the next 18-24 months from ‘training provider’ to ‘consultative business partner’ by developing key individuals so that they are accredited to run foundation skills by year end ‘95; accredited to run facilitation skills training by year end ‘96; and accredited to certify table facilitator practicum.”

As you can see, this Vision is very much about facilitating the skillbase development of CPS facilitators.

Who And Or What Was The CPS Core Team?

Originally, there were three people who, with me, had been on the first CPS Foundations and Facilitation skills courses run in the UK. They were: Paul Wright, John Rees and Andy Wilkins. Paul and Andy worked in Bull’s Strategy and Planning Department and John was an HR manager. None of these people were strictly CPS facilitator / trainers and each had a principle responsibility other than teaching or facilitating CPS.

All three were extremely passionate about learning more about using the CPS process and teaching it to others. They could see the power of CPS when applied to real business issues. When I took the position of company training manager, they were already working with each other as process buddies or independently with clients in the organization. As a result of this, they were establishing themselves as competent CPS practitioners adding value in the front lines of the business.

After about a year of working with a CPS core team of 4, we decided that it would be a good idea to bring 3 new team members into the core team. Our reasons for doing this included allowing others the opportunity to develop their skills in an accelerated

way by participation in teaching CPS to others; allowing more flexibility in the delivery of CPS training; and having people available and up to speed with their development to replace somebody from the original team of three should one of them move on or otherwise become unavailable to teach CPS.

With 3 new team members: Emer Wynne, Steve Hirst and Paula Normanton, we were now the Magnificent 7! The Magnificent 7 was the first team of CPS trainers outside “The B” in Buffalo to achieve stand alone accreditation to teach CPS Foundations and CPS Facilitation skills courses. No other organization in the world has achieved this level of accreditation.

During the journey, the benefits to us were clearly considerable. As a result of our mutual push and pull with the team in Buffalo, we were instrumental in helping “The B” to gain valuable insights and process improvement to their accreditation processes.

Although we never got a perfect 5.0 in overall result from our students (that honor falls to Brian Dorval as the first CPS trainer to achieve this), we consistently achieved very high scores typically in the 4.6 to 4.8 range.

What Did I Do As The Sponsor To Support The Team's Development?

When Scott asked me to consider my role and what I did to contribute to the team’s success, my initial thoughts were “... well not all that much really.....”. But, with some help from Scott, I began to realize that the leadership I provided was a unique value added to the team. In the facilitation skills training of CPS we

I quickly realized that much of what I’d been doing to support the team was very closely related to specific leadership behaviors.

had used James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner’s Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). I quickly realized that much of what I’d been doing to support the

team was very closely related to specific leadership behaviors as identified in the five dimensions of Kouzes and Posner's LPI.

Here are a few examples of what I did against the five principle leadership behavior categories defined in the Leadership Practices Inventory:

Challenging the Process: LPI Item "Looking for ways to Innovate" The main innovation was to seek independent accreditation. Another was that I introduced a number of people from external organizations to participate in our courses. In so doing, I challenged the status quo of running CPS for internal people only.

LPI Item "Stays up to date" I maintained regular contact with CPS-B and actively promoted each core team member to establish and maintain their own relationships with the team at "The B." A direct result of this relationship was an invitation from Scott to Andy, John, Paul and I to participate in a conference in Florida for CPS practitioners in February '97.

Inspiring a Shared Vision: LPI Item "Describes the future we can create" An example here would be the Vision statement mentioned earlier. This Vision and our collective buy-in to it was the most powerful motivator underpinning our success with CPS.

LPI Item "Shares future Dream" We met as a core team on a fairly regular basis and, of course, during CPS training sessions. In our conversations, I often found myself talking about the wonderful things we were doing and where it was going to take us.

Enabling Others to Act: LPI Item "Treats others with respect" When you read this for the first time it's easy to say "well, of course. I do this all the time." but in my experience it's not easy to do this all of the time with everybody. Our strength as a team came from the differences in each of us and this can only work from a full and utter trust in each other's capabilities and intentions.

LPI Item "Allows others to make decisions" When it came to knowing about CPS and how to use it, the core team became far more conversant with CPS tools, process and teaching it to others than I did. So I left all decisions about the content and delivery of teaching CPS on our training courses to Andy, Paul and John.

Modeling the Way: LPI Item "Sets clear goals and

milestones" The Vision gave our goals and milestones and it was very powerful in focusing our energies.

LPI Item "Practices what is espoused" Under the guidance of the team, I participated in every CPS training course at the beginning to launch the course and to set learning goals for the students. I also participated in the close of every course and the subsequent post course ALUo review.

Encouraging the Heart: LPI Item "Celebrates Milestones" I made sure that after every post course ALUo, we celebrated our overall course performance rating and the achievements of each member of the delivery team.

LPI Item "Tells others about the group's work" In my conversations with Scott, I made sure to keep "The B" up to date with developments and achievements. I also talked a lot to others inside and outside of the company about what we were doing.

In closing, we, as a team, have achieved our vision. I am very proud of what we have accomplished. My instinctive nature to focus on core skills development has clearly had a considerable impact. I'm mindful of an old proverb that goes something like...

"You can lead a team of horses to water, but you can't make them drink."

None of what we achieved would have been possible without the personal drive, energy, passion and commitment that John, Paul, Andy, Emer, Steve and Paula have for the CPS process. I feel very privileged and honored to have had the pleasure of working with them and my friends at CPS-B.

This was not about training. It was about how a training initiative coupled with organizational need and the work of professional CPS practitioners resulted in significant financial benefits for the organization. It's not often that organizational development of the nature and scope identified by the impact study comes from an HRD-sponsored program.

Allan Brooks is currently an independent consultant who specializes in working with computer information systems developers. Prior to going private, Allan was a Human Resources Staff Development Manager with BULL Information Systems UK.

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Hi! I was recently given the opportunity to become involved with this newsletter. I would like to take this opportunity to say that I am very excited about this new challenge and look forward to supplying all of you with a quality product. As the purpose of this newsletter is to serve you, the readers, I welcome any comments or suggestions to improve my work. The address for CPS-B is found on the back page, please feel free to make use of it. I have many ideas for future editions and I hope to make each publication better than the last. Thank You.

Kristin E. Isaksen
Editor-In-Chief

VISIT OUR NEW WEB SITE AT: www.cpsb.com

This winter, we have been working to improve our internet presence. Our new site contains up to date information and an enhanced graphic layout. Here, you can download a copy of the current and previous volumes of the Communiqué. People interested in attending our 5-day course in Facilitating Creative Problem Solving (CPS) can now register on-line. We are also working on a few surprises to make our site more interactive. To get in on the secret, be sure to bookmark our page and visit us often!

Keith Kaminski
Programs & Research Assistant

Lawlor, M., & Handley, P. (1996). *The creative trainer: Holistic facilitation skills for accelerated learning*. London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. ISBN: 0-07-709030-6 / 184 pages / \$57.50 (10-97 pub. date)

Well folks, with just a little twist, I think we have a pretty good book here. To better represent my interpretation of the book, I would entitle it: *The creative trainer: A holistic, accelerated learning approach to facilitating groups*. This is a book with a true balance between theory and application. To foster understanding, the authors provide an ongoing story line throughout each chapter. This book combines and cites works by John Heron, Carl Rogers, Bandler and Grinder (of NLP fame), Robert Fritz, David Meier, Ned Herrmann, Howard Gardner, Tony Buzan, and others. An impressive list from which to be influenced.

This book is about using accelerated learning techniques in real world applications. It provides six techniques and uses them repeat-

edly in different contexts and situations. This is only half the book. The other (theoretical) part provides insights into group dynamics and learning systems. A four stage teaching model is presented. Also of interest are dozens of individual, partnered, and team-based activities, along with two actual case studies in which the authors synthesize the learnings in the book.

The best summary of this book was written in the Preface by the authors: "This book is about facilitating learning. ...But it is not just about "making easy,"... It is about the empowering and transformation of individuals, of giving them an opportunity to find their uniqueness and their creativity." (pg. xvii). If these are your session goals, or if you've been thinking about using some accelerated learning techniques, but need to understand the "why" of it all (a balance between theory and application), this book is a great place to start!

Glenn V. Wilson

ODE TO FACILITATION

by Barbara Babij

I'll tell you a tale of more than one intervention
Where process and roles deserve some
attention.

I combined CPS with other methods you see,
In fact, in one case, quite deliberately.

The other case was not planned but the why is
now clear
The lesson was learned, at a price not too dear.

I'll share this one first as it's easy to tell
The client was happy it ended so well.

Two facilitators were present and divided the
tacks,
One versed in process one versed in facts.

We expected the group to be properly prepped,
And right along we would smartly have stepped.

But the group was what it was and no one's to
blame,
We used other methods without any shame.

From CPS to discussion we found ourselves
shifting,
And with each shift we were no longer drifting.

We were back on the track and the track was
now paved,
The outcome it seemed had truly been saved.

So what can we learn from this CPS story?
That improvisation can lead straight to glory.

A client & resource group in the know
Are the two places from which content should
flow.

When the group is not trained nor in the subject
too rounded,
Concerns for the outcome are really
well-founded.

Ideas, plans or options won't make for gestalt,
The process might come to a slow grinding halt.

But it's okay, it's all right, it's not such a mess,
When the process is flexible and CPS!

As a traditional consultant new software I
needed
The old software you see, had become obsolete.

Brainstorming was used to develop criteria,
Ideas soon blossomed and looked like wisteria.

Musts and wants were ID'd with two colors of
dots,
The musts were retained, the wants were "use-
nots."

Our choices were narrowed by market selection,
Those not fitting for use would face swift
rejection.

Comparing the old way was quite inefficient,
This method was faster and almost omniscient.

The Matrix was used to compare options to
functions
We eliminated software without any
compunctions.

The results were successful, the methods
diverse,
Moving toward a shared vision and not in
reverse.

BOOKS ON CREATIVITY: SUGGESTED READING

Contributed by Mark Runco

If you are interested in some recent literature on creativity we would recommend the PERSPECTIVES ON CREATIVITY BOOK SERIES published by The Hampton Press. Titles currently available in this series include:

Montuori, A. (1996). *Unusual associates: a festschrift for Frank Barron*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Runco, M. A. (1997). *Creativity research handbook (vol. 1)*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Ableman, R. (1996). *Reclaiming the wasteland: TV and gifted children*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Abra, J. (1997). *The motives for creative work*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Barron, F. (1996). *No rootless flower*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Jausovec, N. (1995). *Flexible thinking*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

If you are interested in additional information on any of these selections please call 1-800-894-8955 in the US and Canada or send an email to HamptonPr1@AOL.com.

Kinlaw, D. (1996). *The ASTD trainer's sourcebook: Facilitation skills: Create your own training program*. New York: McGraw Hill. ISBN: 0-07-053444-6 / 291 pages / \$39.95

This sourcebook provides existing trainers a conceptual and organizational structure for training facilitators. The book begins with an "Introduction" chapter that you will not want to skip (worth the price of the book alone). In it, Kinlaw presents an excellent format for presentations using headings, times, icons, actions and supporting materials, a format which I have adapted to my own presentation designs. It can bring clarity and direction when you need it most! In the next chapter, the author presents a "Model for Superior Facilitation," based on six sets of competencies which are the basis for the rest of the book. Then it's off and running into design.

Next, Kinlaw takes a rather comprehensive view of workshop preparation and provides tips and useful checklists, right down to providing pages which can be copied for table tents and

workshop certificates. The next four chapters deal with facilitation training designs. The designs are for one hour, half-day, one-day, and two-day training programs.

Yes, you could train facilitators with any one of the program designs, but I would hope you wouldn't. The danger in this book is that it is so well written and thought through that it could work. However, the designs are developed on Kinlaw's model of "superior facilitation" -- a linear, rational, myopic approach to training facilitators making it only one person's view. As a practicing, reflective facilitator, I am continually learning and I can assure you (and I believe any professional facilitator would), if you're doing it right, you will too. Kinlaw does an excellent job in presenting some of the "hows" of facilitation. I advise you (and the title reiterates what I am about to say) to use this book as a sourcebook. If you've got an extra \$40, go ahead and put it on your shelf.

Glenn V. Wilson

EVENTS

June 21-26, 1998

Creative Problem Solving Institute '98 (CPSI)

State University of New York at Buffalo
Buffalo, NY

Registration by phone: 1-800-447-2774 or 716-675-3181

Registration by fax: 716-675-3209

Electronic registration: www.cef-cpsi.org

July 12-16, 1998

KAI Certification Course

Sponsored by: The Occupational Research Centre, and Blumberg Center
Radisson Hotel
Indianapolis, IN

Registration by phone: 812-237-2830

Registration by fax: 812-237-8089

Electronic registration: soelitt@befac.indstate.edu

July 16-19, 1998

The Annual National Conference on Creativity in American Colleges and Universities

Northwood University, Alden B. Dow Creativity Center
Midland, MI

Registration by phone: 517-837-4478

Electronic registration: Creativity@Northwood.edu

August 9-12, 1998

International Creativity and Innovation Networking Conference '98 (ICINC)

Hyatt Regency
Cincinnati, OH

Registration by phone: 513-728-4671

Registration by fax: 513-728-4672

Electronic registration: planmtgs@eos.net

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is CPS? • Conceptions and Styles of Creativity <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPS Guidelines • CPS Language and Tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPS Language and Tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning to Facilitate CPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPS Facilitation Practice and Feedback Sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPS Facilitation Practice and Feedback Sessions <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking CPS Forward



CPS-B 1998-99 Program Registration Form

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

Please the program(s) you wish to attend:

Facilitating CPS, Buffalo, NY \$1,850.00

November 2-6, 1998
 April 26-30, 1999
 November 1-5, 1999

Registration Fee: Registration fee 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 course.

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

- 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.
- Please send an invoice to the attention of: _____ at the following address: _____

About the Communiqué

The Communiqué is an informal newsletter occasionally published by CPS-B. It is designed to highlight and share key information about our current developments, research and program activities.

If anyone is interested in submitting a short article, headline or calendar item, please contact Kristin Isaksen at:

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