

PARENT PERSPECTIVES

This issue of *Parent Perspectives* comes from Mary Ann Cook of the Arizona Affiliate. Mary Ann shares ideas about creativity and how it relates to Future Problem Solving. Please enjoy!



UNLOCK the SPARK!
Ignite, Navigate, Cultivate Your Creativity!

DEFINITION

What is creativity? One of the many definitions of creativity states that creativity is the use of the imagination to generate original ideas. People are born with the natural ability to come up with completely original ideas, to generate alternative solutions to problems, and to conceptualize imaginary objects through storytelling for entertainment purposes. Some people are perceived to be more creative than others because they are motivated to use creative problem solving.

At Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI), we purposefully work with our students to help them become more creative. Here is FPSPI's mission statement: "To develop the ability of young people globally to design and promote positive futures through problem solving using critical and creative thinking."

FIVE MYTHS

The website <http://curiositateaching.com/myths> cites the following misconceptions that can act as stumbling blocks to those of us who feel we are not creative enough:

Mysterious - Creativity is a rare form of genius possessed by only a few people. It comes from some outside source and you cannot control it. We know so little about it.

Mystical - Creativity is an elusive phenomenon that evaporates or vanishes if you try to look at it too closely or study it in depth. It is believed to be an ethereal gift bestowed on a few.

Madness - Creative behavior is bizarre, bordering on mental illness. Creative individuals are strange, odd, and weird. It is viewed as an antisocial or unhealthy behavior.

Magical - Creativity involves trickery, not substance. It's like watching a magician performing and being in the audience trying to figure out the "trick." Many think they cannot work the "magic."

Merriment – Creativity involves behavior that is totally spontaneous and undisciplined. It doesn't happen with any forethought or planning. It is used to entertain and surprise us. (Continued)



Contributor Mary Ann Cook exploring Nova Scotia.

In actuality creativity needs to be enriched and improved like a muscle that needs to be strengthened through exercise. Focused practice and persistence are ways to attain a better sense of creativity. **FPSP** **TEACHES** creative problem solving in **EACH** of the components (Global Issue Problem Solving; Community Problem Solving; Scenario Writing; Scenario Performance; Action-based Problem Solving.) Once trained, the students are expected to **APPLY** the creative problem solving processes in their problem solving.

HOW? Here is one way...Viewing problems through a new method or perspective is required, as is the ability to step back and come up with alternative solutions to problems, or at least new ideas to approach problems. Learning how to access deeper thoughts comes from cultivating mental flexibility and navigating through unpredictable thought processes. The ability to feel confident and patient with oneself, even when triggering creativity, is difficult or slow to come. Learning to recognize the validity of fleeting ideas and thoughts is also essential to the process.

Always try to look at a plan of attack from every possible angle to anticipate roadblocks and formulate a plan to trouble shoot a problem. Focused practice and persistence are ways to attain a better sense of creativity. Recognize that mistakes can be beneficial and that everything may be a remix.

Parents are encouraged to peruse the FPSP website (www.fpspi.org) to realize how involving students in one or more components can help dispel the misconception that, "I am not creative." With continued practice, creativity can **IMPROVE!**

(Continued)



Arizona, - Prince Elementary School students facilitated a STEM Day. They manned a STEM booth for students in 3rd through 5th grade.

• • • • •
• "Creativity is intelligence •
• having fun! •
• ~Albert Einstein~ •
• • • • •

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

There are many ways, strategies, and tools to help you improve your creative skills; however, for FPS a good place to start may be in the category of writing. From the blog [ghost](#) the posting of August 2015 by Belle Beth Cooper, I found this strategy to be useful. It's in the form of a ten-minute writing workout entitled, "Combining: Improve your ability to create new connections."

Instructions: Create a big list on slips of paper, using the categories **PEOPLE, PLACES, THEMES**. THEMES could be topics such as the meaning of life, laughter, inequality, unhappiness. You may also use random word generators from two recommended Internet sites: [Randomlists.com](#), or [watchout4snakes.com](#).

Keep generating words until you have two that are from different categories. Write for ten minutes on how they could be connected. Write a story that relates a memory or simply write down your musings about how these two ideas could be connected. Be willing to embrace all ideas, combine or repurpose ideas to discover a new application, or mix and match old ideas.

See the attached [THINKING TOOLS](#) document, noticing the force fitting activity, "Forcing Relationships," under **GENERATING TOOLS**. We teach these skills to improve the creativity of us all, not just that of our students.

This is the same type of creativity teaching tool that you can use when your child is in need of some help with generating ideas!

If you would like to improve your own creativity, a 2 ½ day Creative Problem Solving workshop will be held immediately following International Conference 2017 on June 11th-13th.

[Details](#) on registration are provided in this newsletter.



SPARKS TO PROPEL

An inspirational quote from John Muir (1838 – 1914) a Scottish-American naturalist and founder of Sierra Club, "Indeed, the power of imagination makes us infinite."

A cubist painter Juan Gris from Spain (1887-1927) stated, "You are lost the instant you know what the result will be."

CREATIVITY = creative thinking +
critical thinking + creative productivity

GET SET...GO!!



More creativity in action from Arizona
students from Prince Elementary
School!

A PROBLEM SOLVER'S TOOLBOX...

"Tools for the mind" - for working more easily, powerfully and efficiently in FPS or CPS.

GENERATING TOOLS

To help problem solvers generate many, varied or unusual responses

Brainstorming and its Variations (All FPS Components) – generating many, varied, or unusual responses for an open-ended question or task

- Paper Brainstorming – write gist of an idea on small piece of paper and share with your group.
- Brainwriting – fill in three blocks of a 12-block paper and pass the paper on, continuing until all sheets are filled in. Most promising listed on group sheet.

Forcing Relationships (GIPS; CmPS; SW, ScP) - combining seemingly unrelated words or objects or concepts to create new possibilities or connections

- Force Fitting – link unrelated objects, pictures, sounds, or words to generate new options or possibilities.

Checklisting (All FPS Components) – using action words or phrases to “trigger” new or varied options

- SCAMPER – use acronym: **S**ubstitute - **C**ombine - **A**dapt - **M**odify/**M**agnify/**M**inify - **P**ut to other uses - **E**liminate - **R**earrange

Analyzing or Combining (All FPS Components) – exploring new options by considering parts, structure, or combinations of elements

- Morphological Matrix – With a 4 column by 10 row chart, identify 4 major dimensions of the challenge and 10 elements of each dimension. Picking one element from each of the 4 columns for consideration, explore random combinations.
- Ladder of Abstraction – Ask WHY as you work up the ladder to find broader ideas and HOW as you move down the ladder, narrowing options.

FOCUSING TOOLS

To help problem solvers make innovative and effective decisions

Organizing (All FPS Components) – clustering, categorizing, compressing, or arranging options within an extensive set of possibilities

- Hot Spots – Identify clusters of promising ideas which share common features.
- Highlighting – Restate Hot Spots for FPS steps.
- Sequencing SML – Arrange options/possibilities in a logical order; e.g., short, medium, long range options.

Evaluating (GIPS; CmPS; AbPS) – judging, selecting, weighing, choosing options

- Identifying Hits – Select the most “on target” ideas for the task or purpose.
- Evaluation Matrix – Consider one criterion at a time, using the grid to rank ideas.

Prioritizing (GIPS; CmPS) – ranking options

- Paired Comparison Analysis (PCA) – Compare one idea against another, one pair at a time, until all pairs have been examined with preferred advancing.

Refining and Developing (GIPS; CmPS; AbPS)

– examining options to improve them

- **Advantages/Limitations (to overcome)/Unique Potentials (ALoU)** – For each option consider advantages, limitations, overcoming the limitations, and the option’s unique potentials.
- WIBAI = Wouldn’t it be awful if?
- WIBNI = Wouldn’t it be nice if?

Key to abbreviations:

AbPS = Action-based Problem Solving
 CmPS = Community Problem Solving
 GIPS = Global Issues Problem Solving
 ScP = Scenario Performance
 SW = Scenario Writing



Adapted from A Problem Solver's Basic Toolbox,
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CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING WORKSHOP

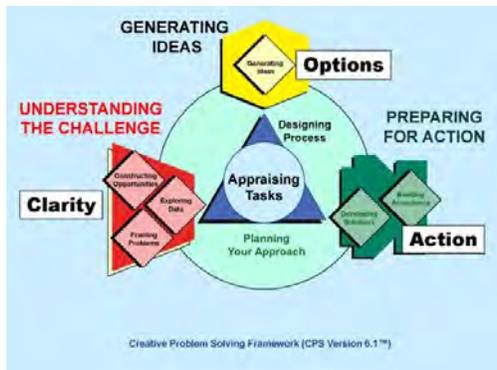
Explore innovative means of creative action through individual style.

Offered by Center for Creative Learning LLC through FPSPI



June 11-13, 2017

University of Wisconsin La Crosse



This two and a half day training will focus on the Creative Problem Solving process during a fast-paced, hands-on, minds-on workshop. This powerful and practical framework of tools and resources for thinking creatively and critically, solving complex, open-ended challenges and problems, and managing change will become a way of life. Our CPS 6.1™ framework builds on more than five decades of research, development, and practical application worldwide in schools and other non-profit settings, as well as in corporations. Creative Problem Solving provides tools that can be applied successfully by problem solvers of all ages.

Benefits of This Training

- Create fresh new ideas and put them to work immediately.
- Turn your "good" ideas into real action.
- Understand your own problem solving style when solving problems and managing change, whether working alone or in a group.
- Acquire creative thinking skills that can be used in the classroom or in personal life.
- Learn how problem solving can inspire students to think deeper and be more engaged.

Location & Times

This workshop will be held on the campus of University of Wisconsin La Crosse. Residence halls are available (\$50 per night in Reuter Hall, which includes AC and a kitchen) or local hotels are nearby. Housing and meals are the responsibility of the participants.

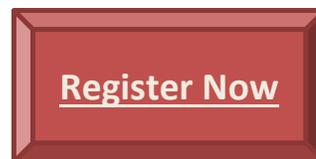
- Sunday, June 11th
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- Monday & Tuesday, June 12th-13th
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Registration, Fees, and Payment

Special early bird rate of \$450, if registered by March 15, 2017

\$475 if registered by deadline – April 28, 2017

Payment due by May 1, 2017.



Click the button to register or register through [CreativeLearning.com](http://www.creativelearning.com).

NOTE: Minimum enrollment of 10 is required for the course to occur. If minimum enrollment is not met by the April 28th deadline, you will have the option to cancel or attend a specialized small group session at a higher cost.



Presenter:
[Dr. Ed Selby](http://www.creativelearning.com)

Center for Creative Learning LLC
<http://www.creativelearning.com/>