PART IV

EDUCATION

1. METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY STIMULATION

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Abstract: *Creativity is one of the specific human traits. The development of personality is most often realized in close correlation with the creative dynamics of each one. The paper proposed by us brings into discussion the most important factors that contribute to the development of creativity. What makes us more creative, what are the conditions that unleash the creative forces of the individual's mind? First, the cultural factors, inherited ideas about creativity, are critically analyzed. Thus, there are a number of "myths of creativity" that infuse our perception (sometimes in a wrong way) on the definition and understanding of creativity. The family also offers, through education and personal example, means of stimulating creativity. It is the first step towards performance creativity. In this paper, we also present the best-known techniques of creativity training, some of them, in the view of the "new age" trend. Creativity always interferes with a task, as we have to improvise, responding for moment to moment to the changing demands of the situation. Daily creativity improvise and is therefore, different from what the researchers of creativity have studied: creativity that results in a finished product. In order to become more creative, we will have to orient ourselves differently: to have a motivation for it, to choose a field in which we excel, to accept collaboration, to be confident and take risks. Creativity means rejecting the conventional, the routine and finding new solutions in personal development.*
Key words: *creativity, personality, family, society, brainstorming*

1. Daily creativity

Daily creativity improvise and is therefore, different from what the researchers of creativity have studied: creativity which has as consequence a *finished product*. There is an increasing number of research into the creativity of performance, and if we want to be more creative in everyday life, we will have to take this research into consideration. Music and theater performance studies, for example, show how individual can be more creative by simply taking a role, even when there is no finished product at the end of the process. These studies highlight the following aspects that characterize everyday creativity: it is collaborative; is improvised; can not be pre-planned or revised carefully before execution; appears unpredictable within a group of individuals; depends on

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common cultural knowledge; in everyday creativity, the process is the product itself. Everyday creativity does not question the isolated individual and the mental processes involved in manifesting his special talent. It is the complex process of social insertion, where creativity occurs mainly in execution action rather than in thinking or design.

2. Education and creativity

In the 1950s, Sidney Parnes and E. Paul Torrance did not agree with their colleagues: they were among the few psychologists who thought creativity could be learned (Parnes, 1993). Most personalities in psychology have considered creativity to be similar to IQ, and so it was inherited by birth for each individual, and therefore can not be deliberately changed later. In 1955, at the Utah Conference, discussions focused on "identifying creative scientific talent" and not on the development of creativity; in 1959 at the same annual conference, Torrance and Parnes reported some experimental results that showed that the idea of training the ability of creativity could work. As a result of this new approach, the name of the conference was changed to "Identifying and Developing Creative Science Talent" (Parnes, 1993, p. 472). In 1972, Torrance analyzed two decades of research and found 142 studies showing that through education it is possible to develop creativity (Torrance, 1972).

If creativity can be learned, then the directors of large corporations can become very interested. After all, innovation is the key to the progress of modern corporations. That is why those who offer advice on how to become more creative are highly paid consultants. Some of the best-known creative consultants are trained by Lego Group AG, the Danish parent of the company that produces the reputable toys for children. Management consultants are trained to use Lego blocks in "Serious Play" workshops, with the directors of the institutions. Perhaps it's hard to imagine that a middle-aged man with a white shirt and tie is playing with Lego, but the idea becomes widespread, taken over by companies such as Nokia, Daimler-Chrysler, Ikea and Alcatel. *Lego is efficient because it allowed directors to visualize abstract concepts such as the "chain of values" or "process engineering"* by *"building their own interpretations for them"*, said Kimberly Jaussi (quoted in Hennessey)[302]. Lego Corporation has not created the idea of using Lego to teach creativity în corporations; several management consulting firms have been doing it for years, including the IDEO Corporation in Palo Alto, California and the Creative Leadership Center in Greensboro, North Carolina. As has been seen many times, many creations are emerging phenomena, and the idea of using Lego for consulting in corporate creativity has materialized in a moment of *insight* at Lego's headquarters. It was an emerging collective phenomenon. These uncertain approaches to creativity training were a product of modern society in

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[302]Henneseyet al. (2002). Emergence of modern human behavior: Middle stone age engravings from South Afric a. In *Science,* 295(5558), 1278–1280, p. 270.

the 1990s, when small businesses were more receptive to unusual approaches than large and old corporations in the industry.

A popular method of modeling creativity is *morphological synthesis.* Team members enumerate the important dimensions of an object and the range of possible attributes for each dimension, and then consider new combinations of them. Another option is to divide a complex problem into its elements and then identify the possible solutions for each element, while exploring all the possible combinations of different solutions. Because of the multitude of possible combinations, this method can generate a wide variety of potential solutions. The biggest problem with morphological synthesis is the correct correct breakdown of the problem in its constituent elements. Therefore, morphological techniques are effective for well-structured problems and work better for those types of creativity necessary in problem solving.

However, the most popular method of enhancing creativity is the *brainstorming*; in brainstorming sessions, the group makes free associations, without making any criticism remarks. This method was developed by advertising director Alex F. Osborn, who popularized the technique in his book "Applied Imagination"(1953). Osborn's technique has become so widespread that the word brainstorming has become part of the English language.

Synectics is a variation of brainstorming that focuses on the use of analogies as catalysts for creativity (Gordon, 1961). Synectics teaches groups to use three types of mental operations: *direct analogies* that compare parallel facts; *personal analogies* that require individuals to imagine that they are something else (animals or things); and the *analysis of conflicts* synthesized in contradictory terms such as "cheery pain". *Brainwriting* is an extension of brainstorming involving the writing of ideas on paper in order to maintain both a better image of all ideas and to reduce the potential negative effects of the group. *Method 635* is a variation of the brainwriting method in which a group of six people generates three ideas each, writes them on a sheet of paper and then it is taken hand-in-hand, five times; each time each participant adds a new idea. A typical session of Method 635 takes about five minutes. Method 635 is particularly good in generating names or slogans (Geschka, 1993).

The most elaborate brainstorming development is *Creative Problem Solving* (CPS), developed by the International Center for Creativity Studies, a group founded by Alex F. Osborn in the 1950s in Buffalo, New York (Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger, 1994, 2000, Isaksen & Treffinger, 1985; Treffinger, Isaksen, & Dorval, 1994). The CPS method developed by Osborn, Parnes and their colleagues is based on a few general recommendations:
►In the first stages, they focus on *generating* (creative or divergent thinking). The interest is directed at the first stage, towards the *quantity* of ideas, rather than towards their quality; delay the judgment; look for links between new emerging ideas. ►After analyzing and choosing ideas, they focus on them (critical or convergent thinking). At this stage, it is necessary to consider both

the positive elements and the negative aspects of the various ideas and solutions; explicit expression of personal opinions become necessary.

There are three components and six stages of the creative process: understanding the problem or the challenge (three steps), generating ideas (one step) and preparing for action (two steps). Each of the six stages has a generating component (divergent thinking) and a concentration component (convergent thinking). The three stages of the "understanding of the challenge" are building opportunities, exploring data, and engaging issues. There is only one step to "generating ideas", namely, the classic brainstorming phase. There are two stages in "preparing for action": developing solutions and accepting constructions.

Many other books on creativity also emphasize that creativity takes place in stages and that divergent thinking is the starting point, followed by convergent thinking (Perkins, 2000). *Cognitive psychology* is the one that brought the idea of phased development of intellectual processes and creativity, at the same time.

Although, methods of enhancing creativity seem exciting and even effective, however, there is hardly any solid, experimental evidence that these methods work (see Feldhusen & Goh, 1995; Stein, 1993). For example, studies have repeatedly shown that brainstorming groups come with fewer ideas than the same number of isolated individuals who work separately (Larey & Paulus, 1999). However, the belief that groups are more creative than isolated individuals is so widespread that it was called *"the illusion of group efficiency"* (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003)[303]. Other more recent studies have shown that certain types of groups, structured in the right way, can be more creative than isolated individuals (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003). These confusing findings may simply reflect the fact that it is so hard to develop a test of measuring creativity and therefore it is hard to measure if creativity has increased or not. For example, most brainstorm assessments measure the *divergent thinking* - the number of ideas the group generates - even if researchers have found no evidence that divergent thinking is correlated with an effective creative outcome. Researchers still disagree on the best training methods, whether they work or not, and how to test their effectiveness (Marcus & Neacsu, 1972).

3. The socio-cultural approach to creativity

The socio-cultural approach of creativity brings to light some common problems found in training programs:

1. Many training programs assume that creativity is an individual process or capacity, while we have seen that much of the creativity results from complex social and organizational systems. And even if brainstorming is a group activity, it tends to focus on increasing the creativity of individuals in the group

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[303]Paulus, P. B., & Nijstad, B. A. (2003). *Group creativity: Innovation through collaboration.* New York: Oxford, p.87.

(Hennessey, 2002); does not require fundamental changes in organizational structure and culture. Increasing employee's creativity in a company will not necessarily increase the company's creativity; a new organizational structure or culture might be needed.

2. Many training programs assume that creativity is universally applicable, a general domain when, in fact, we have seen that the greatest cultural creativity is specific to a particular field (Baer, 1993). Creativity requires a person to become an extremely well-informed expert in his field of activity. Creative development programs rarely instruct individuals to learn more about what has appeared before, even though this is a prerequisite for creativity.

3. High levels of creative performance require a high level of commitment and dedication, a level that is unlikely to develop unless the individual considers the intrinsically motivating task. Even so, very few of these training programs underline the importance of commitment, hard work and intrinsic motivation.

4. Many training programs underline that the moment of creative understanding or *insight* is the critical element of creativity, while most research suggests that the understanding moment or *insight* plays a very small role in creative work. Rather, creative products result from lengthy, complex processes involving people's networks and long hard work, during which many independent, but connected, mini-insights take place. However, training in creativity rarely teaches individuals how to program and design an extended project so as to encourage and incorporate these many *mini-insights* into sequential and incremental perspectives.

Considering everything we know about the initiation and development of creativity, why still many training programs continue to be applied in a scientifically incorrect way? Do we owe this to our cultural concepts about creativity? Many creativity training programs are as they are because they conform to our culture myths about creativity (Boden, M., 1991).

Considering that the moment of understanding or insight is critical, creativity consultants give us what we want: teaches us how to have more insight moments. But, on the other hand, researchers know that the insight moment plays a minimal role in the creative act. Creativity is also presented as a skill or process that applies to a general domain, and creative consultants who treat it in this way present creativity as a set of general processes and abilities. We believe that the main reason why we are not creative enough is the presence of constraints and limitations in the environment; the creative council always associates contextual factors with limitations of creativity, while a series of research also shows that contextual factors are essential to creativity. We believe that creativity is a product of an individual mind, and creative consultants focus mainly on improving individual creative skills and not on changing culture and organization. Research in the field shows that creativity is hard work; creativity is usually an incremental step beyond what has appeared before; creativity often

appears in a team, and is not the fruit of one person's work; the development of creativity often requires substantial organizational changes.

4. Humanistic Psychology and New Age Current

"It is ironic that our scientific objectivism about genius is mixed with a strong remnant of what looks like religious faith. The fact is that we can not bring ourselves to renounce the dream of the superhuman ... the post-Enlightenment guise of artistic or scientific genius."
Marjorie Garber, 2002, p. 72

Many counseling books say that the highest level of creativity is reflected in the way someone lives their own life. The "guru" of the visualization, Shakti Gawain (2002) wrote that *"my life is the greatest work of art"*[304]. Such perspectives have been grounded in the humanist psychology of the 1950s by its founders, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers (1961), who have emphasized the importance of **self-actualization**. The spiritual life of man is the final creative product, the highest level of creativity, being the process of becoming a vibrant, living and self-actualizing being. Julia Cameron, author of "*Walking in this world: The practical art of creativity*" (2002), noted: *"I simply wrote down the precepts of divine intervention in our lives, the moment we engage our creativity and, through that, engage our Great Creator."*[305] New Age adherents often claim that they are conducting a deeper creativity that originates in spiritual source. This conception of creativity goes back at least to the time of the ancient Greeks. The outlook of the New Age trend focuses on the process, rather than on the product; creativity is a spiritual practice and not a way to generate useful products. The association of process and creativity emerged in the 1960s (in the art world) and in the 1970s (in cognitive psychology). The New Age movement, which emerged in the 1970s, is not surprising that its assumptions about creativity reflect the general beliefs of the existing culture at that time.

The concepts of New Age creativity are based on the psychoanalytical and spiritual conceptions of the *unconscious*, the importance given to the Jungian dreams and notions called *archetypes*. Many New Age writings are based on the anthropological studies of amateurs that bring back the ethnocentric stereotypes of a century ago: that primitive peoples or children are purer and less corrupt by social convention and civilization. These beliefs about creativity are hard to correlate with modern scientific findings. And, in fact, neither are we. These conceptions of creativity appeared in the romantic era of the nineteenth century.

In the New Age approach, people are advised to *"practice art as a means of awakening"*[306] (Cushman, 1992). The goal is not to increase the quality and marketing of the finished product, because thinking about the final product may

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[304]Gawain, S. (1982). *Creative visualization.* New York: Bantam. (Original work published by Whatever Publishing, March 1979), p. 123.
[305] Cameron, J. (2002). *Walking in this world: The practical art of creativity*. New York: Penguin Putnam, p. 24.
[306] Cushman, A. (1992, March/April). Are you creative? In journal *Utne Reader,* Ogden Publications, Inc. Topeka, Kansas, 52–60, p. 58

interfere with the spiritual effectiveness of the practice. New Age concepts are found in many areas of artistic education, including drawing, writing, acting and music. Anne Cushman (1992) enrolled in every class in the San Francisco area and found some common themes in all. The basic ideas in New Age creativity can be synthesized as follows:

➢ Trust your intuition, honor your initial impulses.
➢ Stay in the present, forget about your plan, and stay tuned to the moment.
➢ Do not cross out or paint over, even if you change your mind.
➢ Create boldly, without afterthoughts or regret.
➢ Focus on the process, not the product.
➢ Create for the pleasure of doing it.
➢ Do not analyze the result, because this is not psychotherapy.
➢ Special talent is not required, and in fact the technique can get in the way.
➢ Practice and persevere.

The question of the quality of the finished product is irrelevant; anything generated

"with a profound consciousness or with total awareness is artful"[307]

(performance artist Ruth Zaporah, cited by Cushman, 1992).

But, of course, many of us are interested in increasing the quality of our products. Students in the art school hope to generate works that will be sold and exhibited in museums, and students in the literature works want to be published. Executives want corporations to develop innovations that can be successfully marketed. But even if the ultimate goal is to create a useful and commercial product, the New Age instructors would argue that we should start our work in this process-oriented way without a well-defined goal. There will be time for critical reflection and editing later. Writing instructor Natalie Goldberg told Cushman that aspiring writers should not go to the publishing stage for at least two years (Cushman, 1992, p. 60). The New Age current have scientific support in Teresa Amabile's research (1996) on intrinsic motivation and Mike Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) mental fluidity research. These psychologists have discovered that most acts of creativity take place when a person is in a mental state of fluidity and New Age counseling is effective in achieving a flow state. However, there is also a rejection of common myths about creativity:

Only the special geniuses are creative. This myth has proven to be wrong for decades of research in cognitive psychology. Creative processes are based on the same psychic processes that every person has.

Creativity is only found in the arts. Creativity is necessary in all life experiences, not only in painting and poetry. Creativity is also important in everyday life, daily conversation, parenting, teaching, ability to be a good friend (Sawyer, 2001).

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[307] Cushman, A. op. cit., p. 59.

Creativity is specific to crazy people. The myth of insanity in creativity is incredibly resilient, despite decades of research and debunking of this connection.

At the same time, many New Age tips perpetuate other myths about creativity. In the work "How to Be an Artist" (Sark, 1989, quoted by Boden, 1991), the author starts from the idea (myth) that children are more creative than adults. Much of Cushman's (1992) advice come directly from the beliefs of the nineteenth-century romantic era where creativity comes from a pure, unconscious or divine inner nature that exists before the conventions of society. Many of these myths, however, have no basis in scientific research.

5. Myths about creativity

We enumerate here some of the best known social-cultural myths about creativity (Boden, 1991):

►**Creativity is Fun.** The flow state of peak experience is extremely positive and self-actualizing, but it would be misleading to describe it as "fun." Creativity is not easy or peaceful.

►**Creativity Is a Burst of Inspiration**. Creativity is not a sudden burst of inspiration, a gift from above, or a divine moment. Rather, creativity is a long, extended process over time, in which many small, mini-insights occur throughout the work day.

►**Creativity Is an Individual Trait.** Creativity is not just a property of individuals, it's also a property of social groups. Modern creativity is more like an improvisation jazz ensemble or like the development of Windows operating system than a poet writing in solitude. Individual creativity is more likely to occur in collaborative groups than in solitude. It's no accident that jazz musicians play better in groups and in front of live audiences than they do alone at home or in group rehearsal with no audience. Creators in all fields of life report their most significant insights-emerging from collaborations (John-Steiner, 2000).

Creativity is a social phenomenon involving variation and selection at multiple overlapping levels of analysis. In fact, for the most part, creativity accepts and builds on convention, means interaction between people and creativity starts from here. *"Being empathetic means to be able to recognize the feelings of others, even when those feelings may not be obvious. A direct consequence of empathy is a better way of managing relationships, listening, and relating to others. They avoid stereotyping and judging too quickly, and they live their lives in a very open, honest way."*[308] (M. Rusu, 2018). There is a small component of novelty in most creative products, but it's always smaller than we think at the time. With 50 or 100 years of distance, almost everything

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[308] Rusu, Marinela, (2018). Portraits and Emotions - Developing Emotional Intelligence Through Art School Intervention, in *Psychology Research Journal*, May, vol. 8, no. 5, p. 179-191, David Publishing, Valley Cottage, New York, p. 181.

being created today will sound and look the same, even though it looks like an incredible variety. There was no freedom of social coercion that led to Einstein, Michelangelo or Shakespeare. Most social systems have interests in the status quo, and true creative novelty is often perceived as dangerous for those in power. As a result, what really needed creative people is not the common sense of humanistic psychology, but rather the thick skin and the great ego sustained the existentialist Salvador Maddi (Maddi, 1975, p. 182). Of course, this type of person does not sound very beautiful, and what has claimed Maddi does not fit our cultural concepts of creativity as the pure and good expression of the self-actualized individual.

►**Choose a Domain That's Right for You.** Domains that are widely available are more likely to experience creativity. In some cultures and historical periods, elites have restricted access to the domain; only a certain privileged class of people could participate.

►**Choose a Field That's Right for You.** A field is more likely to experience creativity if it has formal systems of training, with teachers, mentors, and experts who can pass on the domain of knowledge. An area is more likely to experience creativity if it offers opportunities for newcomers to work in the field. Young talented people will not choose a career if there are no employment opportunities or if the field only accepts elderly people. You can increase your chances of creativity, making sure you work in a field that fits your personality and style. Some fields are very large and require a lot of networks to stay involved and connected. That's good if you're extrovert, but a more introverted person might be intimidated because it will have 5000 people at the annual conference. Introverts could be more comfortable in smaller fields.

6. Beyond conventional and routine

Some other ideas for enhancing your creativity are:

►*Turn Your Gaze Outward Instead of Inward.* Begin by becoming aware of the field that you are working in. Talk to people working in the area.

►*Market Yourself.* The most successful creative people are very good at introducing their ideas to the field. They know who the key people are, and they know how the selection process works. They know how their new product is likely to be perceived. ►*Do not try to become creative in general, focus on one domain.* Try out as many domains as possible. Start with something you love and then branch out from there.

►*Be motivated in an intrinsic way.* Do not expect to be creative if your goal is to become rich and famous. Creativity almost always results from intrinsic motivation. It is often said that even the most sexy careers involve only 10% of the fun stuff, the remaining 90% being work that most people find boring. The most creative are those who choose a career in which they actually enjoy 90%.

►*Do not get comfortable.* The flow state of peak experience tends to occur when your skills are matched by the challenges of the task. If you find that your

work is becoming easier as your experience and skill level increases, then do not just sit back and get comfortable.

►*Balance out your personality.* Many creative people have what seem to be contradictory personalities; they can work at both ends of the personality spectrum. They're both masculine and feminine; they're both introverted and extroverted.

►*Look for the most pressing problems facing the domain.* Work at asking good questions. Do not get caught up solving the easy, known problems.

►*Collaborate.* Develop a network of close colleagues that you can discuss with. Share your ideas with like-minded colleagues.

Use creative work habits. Work hard. Spend long hours working on a task. Expect to work more than 40 hours a week, sometimes much more. Do not give up easily.

►*Be confident and risk.* Shyness, anxiety, and fear always come in the way of creativity. Many creative people seem to be arrogant or have big ego, because they have tremendous self-confidence that allows them to take risks. Once you have some successes, you will be more confident.

The idea of the lone hunter, or the lone voyager or explorer, who's guided by his principles and is going to get there against all odds, that self-image, as romantic and foolish as many people might consider it, is a very powerful force in making a major scientist (E. O. Wilson, quoted in Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 269).

7. Conclusions

The current research on the methods of creativity development offers a whole range of ways involving divergent thinking and convergent thinking. Education, as a complex process at the level of society, must also address, in different ways, the development of young people's creativity. A modern society, based on the rapid circulation of information, offers increased availability but also has a greater need for individual and group creativity.

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