Creativity’s Purpose, Place and Application in Proposal Development

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Describe creativity’s purpose and place in proposal development

- Identify forms of creative activity applicable to proposal development
- Delineate the potentials and limits of a number of creative approaches
- Discuss application of creativity based approaches for working with groups in grant proposal development
BACKGROUND OF PRESENTATION

Personal: Eight years of proposal development experience for dozens of institutions

Literature read:

- 37 research articles
- Five dissertations
- Four books
“The study of creativity is characterized by a variety of key questions, such as the nature of the creative process, whether there are multiple types of creativity, the relationship between high levels of creativity (Big C) and everyday creativity (little c), and the neural basis of creativity.”

CREATIVITY: CURRENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

- Historic elitist
- Pragmatic
- Psychoanalytic
- Psychometric
- Social-personality
- Neuroscientific

DEFINITION OF CREATIVITY

“Creativity requires not only coming up with ideas but knowing when a problem exists to start with, how to define the problem, how to allocate resources to solve the problem, and how to evaluate the value of potential solutions – knowing which ideas are your good ones.”

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AS CREATIVE THOUGHT

- Productive Creativity: related to the development of a machine, a product or a service.
- Inventive Creativity: related to new methods.
- Innovative Creativity: refers to the continuous development of ideas and resulting in new skills.
- Expressive Creativity: where originality and competence are important.
- Emergence Creativity: This type rarely happens since it produces new and novel assumptions.

CREATIVE THOUGHT APPLICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Pattern</th>
<th>Biological Sciences</th>
<th>Business/Management</th>
<th>Music, Theater, Dance</th>
<th>Computer Science</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Architecture</th>
<th>Nursing/Allied Health</th>
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PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AS CREATIVE THOUGHT: RHODES’ FOUR Ps

- Person
- Process
- Product
- Press

RHODES’ PRESS EXPLAINED

• The “crucial (if controversial) point here is that nothing is, or is not, creative in and of itself...[it] is inherently a communal or cultural judgment.”

• “The ‘real’ story is that social context is a key player in the game of creativity. Social conventions, attitudes, and behaviours have some control over reactions to the new, to its meaning, and to its possibilities.”

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AS CREATIVE THOUGHT: GUILFORD’S CHARACTERISTICS

- Fluency: producing many ideas within a relatively small amount of time
- Novelty
- Flexibility
- Synthesis
- Analysis
- Reorganization of existing ideas
- Complexity
- Evaluation

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AS CREATIVE THOUGHT: CLARK’S SUMMARY

“Creative thinking seems to involve two components: generation of novelty via divergent thinking and evaluation of the novelty via convergent thinking. In the area of convergent thinking, knowledge is of particular importance: it is a source of ideas, suggests pathways to solutions, and provides criteria of effectiveness and novelty.”

COMMON CHALLENGES TO CREATIVITY

“Consensus cultures...process that isolates and often punishes individual differences....tricky problems...need composite solutions beyond the knowledge and expertise of one person or a unitary think tank.”

**COMMON CHALLENGES TO CREATIVITY (2)**

*Advanced learning:* “Sometimes, when we are very knowledgeable about something, that very knowledge interferes with our seeing things in a new way....In general, previous experience and knowledge of standard ways for conceptualizing and solving a task [*functional fixedness*] can block creative solutions ....The point is not that some people become entrenched in their ways of thinking and acting, but that **everyone does**. The question isn’t whether it will happen to you but **what you will do about it.”*

COMMON CHALLENGES TO CREATIVITY (3)

Aversion to risk

- “the two great personality characteristics of the highly creative: perseverance and risk-taking.”
- “four main antecedents of team knowledge sourcing and creativity: learning orientation, intellectual demands, risk aversion, and relational capital.”
- A clear majority of the subjects provided qualitative evidence that their willingness to think outside the box and then engage in professional risk-taking was directly fueled by their insistence upon helping others.”
- “key themes included real-world teaching and learning, cross-curricular connections, and taking intellectual risks.”

"Moral compass...[when] solving problems...one of the best ways to start is by putting away your moral compass...consumed with rightness or wrongness...it’s easy to lose track of what the issue is."

COMMON CHALLENGES TO CREATIVITY (5)

Environmental factors

• “Essentially, Sternberg rejects the concept that environments can be benign to one’s creative development. Whether overtly or subliminally, one’s work and learning settings emit potent influences, and so...the creative need to seek out innovation-affirming environments ....Creative ability must be cultivated; it can be harmed or greatly diminished” (p. 46).

• Clark’s study of 66 military officers – creative performance varied based upon setting.

COMMON CHALLENGES TO CREATIVITY (6)

Cultural bias

• “The language, legacies, needs, and beliefs of a society combine to form a culturally appropriate conception .... In the case of a non-Western society, this may be equivalent to the Western concept in some regards but not in others.”

• “Significant differences were found between individualistic and collectivistic cultures in regard to fluency, flexibility, and comfort level, but not in perceived creativity.”

WORKING WITH GROUPS: KEY OBSERVATIONS

- “Over-reliance on traditional rational management methods is held partly to blame for poor creative achievements within organisations”
- “One management style and organisational process will not be sufficient to meet all the different types of creativity.”
- Need to recognize require “composite solutions beyond the knowledge and expertise of one person”
- “The creative individual and the creative collective supporting each other’s existence”

WORKING WITH GROUPS: KEY APPLICATIONS

The goal of education is to produce artists... “individuals who have developed the ideas, the sensibilities, the skills, and the imagination to create work that is well proportioned, skillfully executed, and imaginative, regardless of the domain in which an individual works.”

1. Relationships that satisfy a purpose
2. Flexible purposing
3. Form-content relationship
4. Not everything is propositional
5. Constraints and affordances of the medium
6. Motives for engagement

Source: Eisner, E. (2002). What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education?
Contextualized Multiple Thinking – theorizes six types of thinking within organizations which become evident in beliefs, learning patterns, and actions taken.

1. Technological thought
2. Economic thought
3. Social thought
4. Political thought
5. Cultural thought
6. Conception or practice of learning

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS
THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SESSION

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SOURCES CITED


SOURCES CITED (2)


Eisner, E. (2002). What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education? *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 18*(1), 4-16.


