CREATIVITY as a LEARNING OUTCOME

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Common Attitudes?

- "Creativity cannot be taught"
- "Creativity cannot be measured"
- "Setting Creativity as a learning outcome is a recipe for failure"

Creativity in Faculty of Business undergrad programmes

- BBA Scheme calls for students to be able to:

    – *Identify and invoke mechanisms for the stimulation of creative thinking in the business setting*

    – *NOTE THE JUDICIOUS AVOIDANCE OF 'STUDENTS WILL BECOME CREATIVE' – MAYBE UNNECESSARILY CAUTIOUS???*

WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

- CREATIVITY IS;
    – novel behaviour: doing something in new and better ways
    – creating something new of value
    – doing tasks in new and better ways
    – maybe creativity is simply improvement??!!

CAN WE TAKE ACTION TO IMPROVE OUR CREATIVITY?

- We <u>are not</u> talking about making everyone a creative genius
- We <u>are</u> talking about making everyone understand some basic ideas that will help them be more creative than before

CREATIVITY AS A BUSINESS SKILL

- Companies are increasingly interested in developing the creativity of their managers and staff
- A whole industry has grown up to provide creativity training
- Big names like Edward de Bono and Tony Buzan
- Many other training and development companies
- Try the Internet for yourself or look at the list of Resources in the Workshop Programme

DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM WITH CREATIVITY IN HONG KONG?

- Government has difficulty spending its funding for technology innovation
- Employers complain that their employees are not very creative
- Could there be a link to the education system or local culture?

BASIC ELEMENTS OF CREATIVITY (Epstein's Model)

- We all do multiple things at the same time and the combinations are all different- you are all sitting here, part listening to me, part thinking and doing other things
- The different things we do and think connect with each other to make new things - this is the "generative" process - the idea factory in your head
- We can direct and control the generative process - at least enough to help anyone become more creative

The Key Implications?

- 1. Everyone is "creative" to some extent

- 2. The people we describe as "creative" have special skills

- 3. Those skills can be learned

4 Basic Skills that Add Up to Creativity

- 1. CAPTURING

- 2.CHALLENGING

- 3.BROADENING

- SURROUNDING

CAPTURING

- The generative process never stops working - the idea factory never sleeps
- Early in life (especially in HK?) we are taught to ignore it and to focus on what we are being taught
- CAPTURING is seeing and preserving the new ideas that keep going round our heads
- To be "creative" we need strategies for capturing new ideas

CAPTURING

- "Childish" is bad
  - Immature
  - Silly
- "Child-like" can be good.
  - Open to new ideas
  - Fresh, not so many assumptions

CHALLENGING

- New ideas emerge when old ones come together (even unrelated old ideas)
- We can become more creative by having more ideas competing with each other.
- FAILURE is an important mechanism for forcing ideas together
- "Controlled failure" systems can help us to be more creative without too much anxiety

CHALLENGING

- When we fail at something difficult, there are 5 major responses:
  - we just stop using the behaviour we thought would bring success - we give up
  - we use the same behaviour with more force -we try harder
  - we try variations on the same behaviour
  - we become emotional about it - we get frustrated
  - we bring together all of our past experiences to solve the problem in a new way - we are creative

BROADENING

- If new ideas and behaviours come from combining old ones we need to increase the number of old ones to draw on. That is BROADENING
- More *diversity* helps with bigger changes.
- More *relevance* helps with creative solutions to specific and routine problems

SURROUNDING

- We become more creative as we have more old behaviors to combine into new ones
- In the same way if we have diverse stimuli around us we become more creative. This is SURROUNDING.
- Conflicting stimuli make us feel uncomfortable - how do you feel the first time you are with your parents and a new boy/girl friend? But they can be good for creativity
- In the office, have wall charts, move desks around, sit with different people

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4 Basic Skills that Add Up to Creativity

- There are exercises which can help students develop each of the basic skills
- Personal Skills Development in the BBA – and some work with the Foundation Students
- China MBA uses part of the opening Workshop to do this kind of thing

How do PolyU students perform on Creativity?

- In exit survey 2007 Ugrad students believed the programme outcome was achieved to the same extent as others
- BUT data from WIE supervisors gave the lowest ratings to creativity
- AND alumni rated their learning gain in respect of 'creative thinking' as the lowest
- FB made it an area for improvement in report to AACSB

- IS THIS REAL OR ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE 'VINCENT VAN GOGH' INTERPRETATION OF CREATIVITY

What about measurement of creativity?

- We have used the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (ATTA) on BBA students
- In September 2005 512 Year 1 students and 98 year 3 students completed the test
  - Year 1 mean score = 3.95 – max score is 7
  - Year 3 mean score = 4.4
  - Significant improvement across the two groups
- A second round of testing is currently in progress
- Results just in!!

What about measurement of creativity?

- N =600
- Minimal – 0.8%–versus 4% of adults
- Low – 4.8% – versus 12% of adults
- Below Average 15.6% – 20% of adults
- Average – 29.1% – 26% of adults
- Above average –19.1% -20% of adults
- High – 23.3% – 12% of adults
- Substantial – 7.2% – 4% of adults
- NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL!! BUT insignificant improvement over the three years