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Putting Vision and Learning into Action: Reflections on My Process of Becoming a Creativity Professional

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Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

Putting Vision and Learning into Action
Reflections on My Process of Becoming a Creativity Professional

A Project in
Creative Studies
By
Vivian L. Geffen

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science
April 2015

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State University of New York
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Susan Keller-Mathers, Ed.D
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ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

This Master's Project describes and reflects on elements of my journey to becoming a Creativity Professional. Originally this semester-long project, was focused on my learning about bodymind principles of transformation so that I could then apply them to an original 4-week workshop. What manifested instead was the need to develop a 3-hour introductory workshop and the attendant processes that would support me in finding an audience with which to share my work and help me establish a polished professional presence. This finished Project includes my learning to design and lead transformational workshops, the development of a workshop that includes experiences designed to stimulate the body and the emotions and aspects of my personal process. I describe how I had to refocus and adapt my initial plans for this Project and the tools and thinking that I used to go from where I started to where I ended up. I conclude with a reflection on the entire process of my educational experience.

Keywords: Creative Problem Solving, Facilitation, Transformation, Workshops

Creativity

Vivian L. Geffen

Date

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Acknowledgements

I dedicate this paper to everyone who wants to be creative but thinks they are not. To my students future and past, thank you for letting me do this work with you. To my family for their support and belief in me on this journey, to myself for getting here, sticking to my vision and seeing it through.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	I
Copyright Notice	II
Acknowledgments	III
Table of Contents	IV
List of Figures..	VII
List of Tables	VIII
SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT.....	1
Project Purpose.....	1
Project Description.....	1
Rationale for Selection.....	2
SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE.....	4
Ideas for tool generation and class reformatting.....	4
Workshop Training and Practice Manuals.....	6
Embodiment Practices.....	7
Additional Suggested Readings.....	9
SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN	11
Process Plan11
Project Timeline.....	12
SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES.....	14
Process Outcomes.....	14
Introduction to Outcomes.....	14
Redirecting My Focus.....	14

Tangible Outcomes.....	16
Beginning to establish a brand identity.....	16
Outcome #1: Rename the class.....	16
Outcome #2: Creating a Promotional Piece.....	16
Outcome #3: Developing a Business Building Mindset.....	18
Developing the Offering.....	18
Outcome #1: Designing and introductory class.....	18
Outcome #2: Creating a Workbook.....	20
Workbook sections.....	20
Outcome #3: Leading the Workshop.....	21
Outcome #4: Testing New Tools and Experiences.....	22
SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS.....	25
Reflections on Process.....	25
My Relationship to the Concept of Transformation.....	26
Asking for Help and Getting Specific with My Needs.....	27
Getting Out of My Comfort Zone.....	28
Students Are Teachers.....	29
Act As If.....	30
Not CPS but Inspired By CPS.....	31
Sensitivity-How People Feel About What You Are Asking Them To Do.....	31
Feedback from the Class.....	33
Learn How To Sell.....	34
SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS.....	35

Present and Future.....	35
What Creativity Means to Me Now... ..	35
Preliminary Next Steps.....	36
Incorporating Movement.....	36
Overall Evaluation.....	37
References	38
Appendices... ..	39
Appendix A: Creativity Muse Postcard.....	40
Figure A1: Front of Postcard.....	41
Figure A2: Back of Postcard.....	42
Appendix B: Workbook Selections.....	43
Figure B1: Cover Sheet.....	44
Figure B2: Goals for Class.....	45
Figure B3: Skills and Activities.....	46
Appendix C: Workshop Photographs.....	47
Figure C1: Divergent Thinking.....	48
Figures C2 & C3: Heightening Anticipation.....	49
Figures C4, C5, C6: Class in Process.....	50

List of Figures

Figure 1: Diagram of Processes and Activities.....15

List of Tables

Table 1 Project Timeline.....10

SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Project Purpose

The initial concept for this Master's Project was to develop and lead a transformational workshop. I planned to learn how to design, lead and create transformational exercises so that I could apply them to an original Creative Problem Solving (CPS) based workshop. I planned to focus on a) Understanding what transformation means in the context of a workshop experience, b) Revising of my workshop to include non-CPS elements that link the heart and mind, and c) Improving my ability to teach and lead so that I optimize the creative experience for everyone. The actual outcomes of this project include those elements as well as the unanticipated development a 3-hour introductory workshop, renaming the course and developing collateral material that go along with the class.

Project Description

This Master's project consists of both learning and application phases. For the learning phase, I attended a 5-day residential workshop entitled "Designing and Leading Transformational Workshops." (Kripalu.org) I learned techniques and exercises specific to creating the conditions for having a transformational experience. Throughout the class, I paid attention to how they incorporated movement to support the group bonding process as well as how they approached the instructional aspects of delivering factual information. I attended the workshop in February and was preparing myself for the applied portion of my project that was going to consist of re-designing and presenting a workshop over four weeks during March-April.

The primary creativity concept involved in the process was combine and synthesize (Torrance & Safter, 1999). I sought ways to combine the cognitive and rational approach of CPS with body-based processes. I wanted to design an integrative approach to generating creative thinking for personal transformation that used the wisdom of the body, mind and heart in concert with the cognitive, rational approach that CPS provides. I prefer to facilitate problem-solving in the realm of personal life, so the exercises and workshops would be targeted to individuals seeking solutions to personal challenges.

CPS is the underlying foundation for the workshop; however, I wanted to explore how asking people to participate in bodymind experiences could enhance group dynamics and creative output. I was curious to see what kind of spin that might put on the challenges. Would it help people to be more vulnerable and help them generate meaningful insights or make the class more fun?

Rationale for Selection

I chose to design my project this way because it encompasses two areas of interest to me: transformation and leading workshops. Early in my studies I had an insight that teaching CPS as a tool for personal use could have a powerful effect on a person's life. The phrase "creativity for personal transformation" came to mind and has become the philosophical lens through which I imagine all my future offerings. An entrepreneur at heart, I decided that my path would include creating and offering a workshop designed to deliver the experience of using creative thinking for personal transformation. This idea probably came to me because I have taken many, many workshops, and I have a high degree of passion for them as a tool for self-development. They also answer that familiar question, "What will you do with *that* degree?" The ability to create and lead original workshops satisfies my primary desires for career fulfillment. Workshops

provide me with opportunities to be of service through supporting other's creativity; to do work that is unique and calls forth the best parts of me, and to speak publicly.

During this writing process, I looked back at my admissions essay to this program. I was surprised to see the clarity with which I stated the desire to work with others in this capacity. At the time of that writing, my obstacle was that I did not have a reliable tool that allowed me to feel capable and qualified to deliver the outcome I envisioned. The program at the International Center for Studies in Creativity taught me the grounded platform of CPS. I now use it as the foundational tool for pursuing my vision of using creativity as a tool for personal growth and learning.

SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE AND OTHER RESOURCES

My list of literature is composed primarily of books and articles I have been reviewing because of their relevance to the workshop redesign process. I organized it into sections by topic. I have described why I thought they would be useful to review and what some of the key take aways were for me.

Ideas for Tool Generation and Class Reformatting

Berger, W. (2014). *A more beautiful question: The power of inquiry to spark breakthrough ideas*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing

This book came highly recommended by a member of my cohort. I was interested in it because I am still developing my ability to ask questions that lead to out of the box thinking. I hoped this book would provide me with some reference questions that I might adopt and apply. I found it a very interesting book with many stories of how asking different questions lead to new answers in the business world. One section I found particularly relevant was the original why. Going back to thinking about why a business got started in the first place, is an opportunity to reconnect with the heart of a matter and the initial motivation that started one out in the first place. Maybe I could use this point of view to work with others to help reconnect with their original why. Alternately, I was intrigued by the line of thinking about what if your business did not exist? The author was making a suggestion about detaching from past experience and allowing oneself to think anew about a situation. I think that is the heart of the matter of problem definition; to truly looking at it with fresh eyes. The book is very dense yet inspirational. I will refer to again and again I. I think it contains good seeds for creating new workshop exercises.

Meier, D. (2000). *The accelerated learning handbook: a creative guide to designing and delivering faster, more effective training programs*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

I reviewed this book looking for inspiration about how to think about taking an idea from concept to execution. I also looked at the methodology for accelerated learning in adults which according to this book requires getting the information through to the student through as many sensory means as possible. Their quick mnemonic is the SAVI approach: somatic, audio, visual and integration. The somatic aspect is particularly relevant considering my interest in incorporating movement during my longer-form workshops. This book reinforced the importance of setting the learning environment to support the intentions of the class. That is one thing that I very much take to heart as I know how good it feels to walk into a thoughtfully arranged space. It creates immediate trust and a sense of security.

Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., & Nielson, D. (2011) *Creativity unbound: An introduction to creative process*. Evanston, IL; FourSight, LLC

This softbound book is like the training wheels for the brand new graduate students in the Creative Studies department. It is a thorough, easy-to-use primer on the creative process and easily explains many of the tools we rely on most heavily. I refer to it frequently when I need a quick reminder and to brush up before facilitating.

Puccio, G.J., Mance, M., Barger Switalski, L., & Reali, P.D. (2012). *Creativity rising: Creative thinking and creative problem solving in the 21st century*. Buffalo, NY: ICSC Press, International Center for Studies in Creativity.

I referred to this book because of the simple and straightforward descriptions of divergent and convergent thinking. I particularly wanted to refresh my understanding of the nuances of

effective convergence so that I could translate them into an original exercise I could do in my workshop.

WALINGA, J. (2010), **From Walls to Windows: Using Barriers as Pathways to Insightful Solutions**. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 44: 143–167. doi: 10.1002/j.2162-6057.2010.tb01331.x

This article looked at the nature of insight as a result of reframing problems. It discusses the problem of defining problems and discussed it with reference to the CPS process. The author made the point that an integrated approach to achieving a goal can be achieved by looking at both the perceived barriers and the goal. I was interested in this article because it has been my personal experience that the reframing problems piece is where my workshop attendees receive the biggest insights about their situations. My training in CPS has left me still a little light and uncertain about best practices for this stage of the process, I was seeking another point of view and perhaps additional tools. I will try some self-facilitation practice and try deconstructing problems as I see them looking at resolving barriers instead of goals as a means for re-appraising the problem I am trying to solve.

Workshop Training and Practice Manuals

Cooper, S., & Heenan, C. (1980). *Preparing, designing, & leading workshops: A humanistic approach*. Boston, MA: CBI Pub.

This book was on the reading list from my Kripalu workshop. It is a bit dated at this point and I found it to be dry. The authors are thorough about how to set up and design workshops but their approach is not as dynamic as the tools I have already taken from *The accelerated learning handbook* (Meier, 2000). Since it is written from a humanistic approach the authors do guide the

reader to think about intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of designing a course however as it is such a fundamental guidebook for starting from the ground up, I feel that the best way this book could serve me is in hindsight. For instance, if I have problems with a personality type, I can go back and reference that section of this book to be better prepared next time.

Carnes, Robin D. & Craig, S. (1998). *Sacred circles: A guide to creating your own women's spirituality group*. NY, NY: HarperCollins

I looked at this book for ideas about forming groups. It was not immediately helpful for my real purposes as it is geared towards ongoing circles with a focus on spirituality and sharing. They do offer good information on themes, how to operate a group, ways to manage sharing time, I do feel it is a good resource but not in the way that had hoped for my class because the information was so fundamental that I already had in place some of the elements that they suggested. However, if there comes a time when alumni of my classes want to continue to meet, then perhaps some of the elements in this book will be applicable.

Embodiment Practices

Cuddy, A. (2012, June 28). Amy Cuddy: Your body language shapes who you are

[Video file]. Retrieved from

http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en

I was very interested in the content of this TED talk because of the suggestions that are given regarding using “power poses” to change body chemistry and as a result self-perception. Amy suggests that holding various poses for 2 minutes effects the body and subsequently the affective experience one has and their ability to come across as more powerful or confident. I thought that

incorporating power poses could be an interesting exercise prior to doing visualization activities so that a person could feel powerful in speaking their vision and imagining living into it in a full and powerful way. If somebody feels in their body that their vision is not attainable, then they may not be willing to fill out that last square of a storyboard in a manner that truly represents where they want to go.

Gore, B. (1995). *Ecstatic body postures*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Company Publishing

This book I thought could be an interesting compliment to the Cuddy work. It looks at old statuary from tribal cultures and suggests that sitting in the poses of the statues can induce ecstatic altered state experiences. While I am fascinated by the potential of this result, after further review, I do not think the material is appropriate for my class. The experiences reported as a result of using the poses are more in the shamanistic vein and outside of the scope of my work. However, I might try it out myself.

Lobel, T. (2014). *Turning on lights outside the box: Embodying metaphors. In Sensation: The new science of physical intelligence*. New York, NY: Atria Books

This book's title is about embodying metaphors, but the content that was of particular interest to me was the research around embodied cognition, or the way the body knows and reacts to stimuli that we do not consciously perceive. These ideas were pertinent to me within the frame of reference of how to set up a safe and welcoming space for the workshop environment. For instance, in one study she referenced subjects touched warm or cold items before answering questions about another person. The results indicated "physical warmth promotes emotional warmth." (p. 9). I might use this insight to try and hasten warm feelings among the group by having coffee or tea available upon a person's arrival. Further, I may go so

far as to serve it into their hands regardless of whether they drink it or not so that they have the warm sensation. That is what the experimenters did and results showed that having a person touch a warm glass before thinking about another lead to warmer thoughts about the person.

Maurine, C. & Roche, L.(2001). *Meditation secrets for women: Discovering your passion, pleasure and inner peace*. NY, NY: HarperCollins

The author, Camille Maurine was a long time teacher of mine, and the movement work I did with her has been a key motivator in making me think structuring the workshop as I have. This book is a comprehensive study of various movement, writing, thinking approaches all designed to help women have deep connection experiences with themselves. It is a treasure trove of ideas and reminders of the work we did together. One exercise I particularly like is Jazz Breath. This is where you breathe in different rhythms, like fast or long, short or deep and you change the sounds like ssss, huuu, shh, cha cha cha and it is very enlivening and playful. I could use it as a way to have group forming or to take a break and oxygenate the body. Another tool she writes about is inner characters. I could see adding a playful dimension by asking people to inhabit different characters while diverging, or asking them to find a character inside and have that one take a look at the problem or solving it. I think her work is the key to the melding of mind and body that I am attempting to create.

Additional Suggested Readings

Experiential Learning Theory

Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: Theory in practice*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Robinson, K., & Aronica, L. (2009). *The element: How finding your passion changes*

everything. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Inspiration for Leaders

Maxwell, J. C. (1993). *Developing the leader within you*. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.

Schwarz, R. M. (2002). *The skilled facilitator a comprehensive resource for consultants, facilitators, managers, trainers, and coaches* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Workshop Training and Practice Manuals

Duhl, B. (1994). *Training the trainer: A process manual for successfully leading experiential/cognitive workshops*. Burien, Wash.: AVANTA, the Virginia Satir Network.

SECTION THREE: PLAN AND TIMELINE

Process Plan

My process plan involved the following actions:

1. Attendance at and completion of a 5-day residential course on designing and leading transformational workshops called: Designing and Leading Transformational Workshops. It ran from February 8-13 at The Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Lenox, MA. The course provided in-depth instruction about creating conditions for optimal learning using body-mind techniques designed to cause emotional shifts in self- perception and world view. Specific areas of instruction included insights into the science of mind-body learning, core tools for experiential teaching, ways to spark group creativity, information about marketing and a visioning process to build an action plan. We had opportunities for practicing leadership with the group in processes techniques, as well as opportunities to network, and learn about one and others work.
2. Reviewed my new learnings and new exercises in order to identify and select ones that I thought would be effective and complimentary to my Creativity Workshop. I then figured out how and where to insert them into the course so that they supported the stages of the CPS process that I was teaching.
4. I reconsidered my course offerings and created a one-afternoon introductory course. I then wrote both an instructor's notebook and my participant's workbook for the new workshop. Decisions included, content, layout, creating new exercises including the new exercises and descriptions of how/why they are where they are.

5. Offered the revised class in March.
6. Debriefed the class to identify what worked and what needs improvement. I used surveys to obtain information from the student's perspective.

Project Timeline

Project timeline is outlined in below in Table 1

Table 1.

Project Timeline

Activities/Tasks	Complete By	Time Required (Hours)
1. Concept Paper		
1.1 Complete draft version of the concept paper	2/6	20
1.2 Finalize concept paper	2/16	6
2. Formal Instruction - Designing and Leading Transformational Workshops		
2.1 Attend and Complete course	2/13	25
2.2 Compile insights and ideas relative to my workshop while at retreat center	2/13	3
2.3 Learn the elements of what makes a transformational experience	2/13	3
3. Workshop redesign (Application Component)		
3.1 Review my workshop outline	3/18	2
3.2 Look for best exercises to integrate	ongoing	
5.3 Rewrite workbook incorporating new exercises	3/31	8
5.4 Finding music-trolling the Web and learning to discern moods and tempos that would work for different experiences	ongoing	
4. Offer new workshop		
4.1 Design flyer to distribute at a networking event. Collaborate with designer, seek feedback about copy, write and rewrite copy, develop new streamlined approach to describing the course, identify target	3/7-3/15	25

audience in flyer		
4.2 Attend Fun, Fab, Fem event and distribute new flyer, Invite people to register: goal six people	3/14-15-16	27
4.3 Offer new 3-hour intro class including preparation, clean up and follow up	3/29/15	9
4.4 Gather feedback from attendees, interview willing participants, collect written feedback	3/29/15	1
4.5 Write reflections and learnings I experienced, POInt for class	3/31	1
4.6 Synthesize most important learnings and describe how I will incorporate into the next class	4/15	3
<i>Submit Sections 1-3: Section 1 (Purpose and Description of Project and Rationale), Section 2 (Literature and Resources) and Section 3 (Process Plan and Project Timeline)</i>	3/16	
4 Survey The Web for business resources and transformational workshops		
4.1 Search Web for Transformational workshops	3/18	2
4.2 Read course descriptions, look for keywords and recurring or differing themes	2/28	5
4.3 Watch available videos or read articles about business building online	2/28	25
4.4 Identify my unique value proposition based on feedback	2/28	4
4.5 Begin to build an online presence. Research tools and resources to help me create.	ongoing	10
5. Literature Review	3/5	
5.1 Create final list of books, articles and publications	3/15	10
5.2 Obtain key books, articles and publications	3/10	8
5.3 Read/review books, articles and publications	3/10	25
<i>Submit Sections 4-6(draft): Section 4 (Outcomes), Section 5 (Learning Goals and Evaluation) and Section 6 (Conclusion)</i>	4/13	30
<i>Submit Sections 1-6Final</i>	4/27	5
6. Final Presentation/Demonstration or Display	5/4	3
Total Hours (estimate)		277

SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

Process Outcomes

Introduction to Outcomes

The original plan for this Master's Project was to learn about bodymind principles of transformation so that I could apply them to a Creative Problem Solving based workshop. I was then going to test the results of that process by offering the four-week workshop I created. While I did attend the class and learn skills which I planned to implement, I was unable to run a multi-week workshop. The second half of this project became an exercise in flexibility and fluency as I figured out how I could maintain a teaching component and start to market myself as a Creativity Professional.

Redirecting my Focus

The original concept for this project included learning about and then incorporating bodymind techniques into a four-week workshop. Upon my return from the course at Kripalu, I commenced to set up and enroll folks into my class. It quickly became apparent that I had exhausted my first line of "people who know you and will show up to support you." I was facing the awful dilemma that I did not have students to teach. I reached out to people who had expressed interest in a future class, posted flyers at Whole Foods Market, local yoga studios and coffee houses. I even put an ad on Craigslist but the calls never came. Feeling stymied and disappointed, I needed a new solution. I knew I did not want my project to be theoretical. I had to practice what I learned. I sought advice and quickly retooled. I became open to new strategies and created materials to present myself and my work. I had to think broadly and start to connect with new communities of possibly interested people.

To help facilitate the writing of this paper, I created a diagram (Figure 1) to organize and describe my experience along this journey. It encapsulates the process of what I did, what happened, how I responded and what the outcomes were.

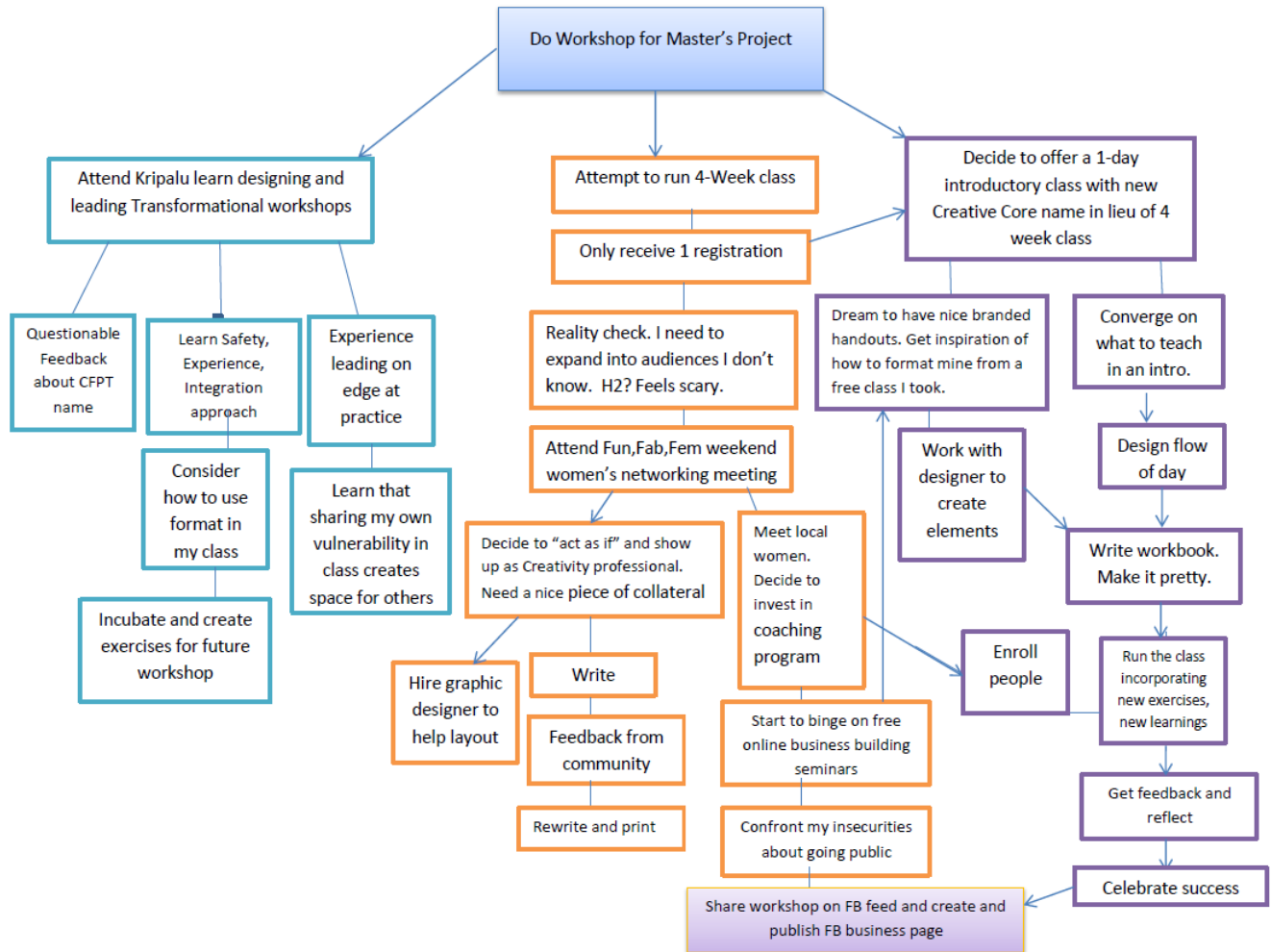


Figure 1: Diagram of my Master's Project process and activities

(Note: CFPT stand for Creativity for Personal Transformation)

Tangible Outcomes

Beginning to Establish a Brand Identity

Outcome #1: Rename the class.

At the Kirpalu workshop, we had opportunities to share our work with the group and to get feedback and suggestions with respect to marketing appeal. Much to my surprise I got consensus feedback that the name I had chosen for my class, Creativity for Personal Transformation, was not compelling, attractive or fun-sounding. This was quite disappointing to hear because it speaks to the essence of what I am trying to achieve in my classes. However, it got me thinking. I started to question how can I remain committed to the underlying principle of using creativity for personal transformation and have a more catchy class name? An ideation session over dinner with a friend yielded the name Creative Core. I decided that I would go with that because it makes a good analogy with the physical workouts like Pilates and circuit training that are so popular right now. The benefits of those workouts include strength, balance and flexibility. Using those images and applying them to ways of thinking makes explaining the benefits of the course more understandable and relatable.

Outcome #2: Creating a promotional piece.

Upon realizing that I was unable to run the four-week class, I decided to attend a women's networking weekend with the hope that I would meet ladies who were potential new students. In order to maximize my impact, I decided that I needed to show up and present myself as an already working creativity professional. My main prop was to be a nice-looking piece of collateral. I worked with a designer and asked her to help me create a layout that used my logo in a creative way. I wanted it to serve a few purposes: a) professionally market me as a

Creativity Expert b) describe all the services I intend to offer and c) introduce my “signature” offering, The Creative Core class. (See Appendix A)

This tangible piece of collateral is the physical manifestation of many process outcomes that took place internally. First I had to overcome the disappointment of not enrolling enough people to run the class for four weeks. I could have completed this paper without the hands-on classroom experience; however, the class was the fulfillment of what I wanted to offer. This dilemma put me face to face with the stark realization that I had reached the end of the line of my best thinking and needed some advice on how to move forward. I called an old friend who has become a full-time business coach, and she advised me to attend the Fun, Fabulous and Feminine women’s (www.funfabfem.com) weekend that was happening soon.

With 7 days to go, I enlisted the help of a designer and set about writing and conceiving of what I wanted to say on my postcard. I reached out to the students from my Kripalu class, got feedback on the initial copy and took their questions and criticisms to heart.

That process in and of itself was a learning. I had to re-think the way I described the class, one important point was the suggestion that I make not about “the process.” This was a challenging distinction because it forced me to consider that I was not selling CPS but the outcome of it. I had to untangle the process from the outcome. As a student, learning CPS has been the heart of my process and what has felt like “the most important piece.” However, as a teacher/facilitator what I am offering are the beneficial outcomes of using the process. An exercise that helped me write from that perspective, was to write about the benefits and outcomes that students will leave with versus how I would get them there. That was a very challenging but salient point. I had to grapple with it for a while, and once I understood the point, it made perfect sense. That direction helped me to focus successfully my message. Another level

of thought I put into the copy was to approach the writing with the intention of making it attractive to a range of personality types. I was inspired by a personality type model (www.whatmakesyoutickandwhatticksyouoff.com) that I was exposed to the Kripalu class. I formatted the copy to include a variety of descriptions so that it appealed to feelers as well as thinkers, and visionaries as well as practical people.

Outcome #3: Developing a business building mindset.

One unexpected outcome of this process was the decision to join a year-long coaching group that will commence in May 2015. As a result of that decision, I started watching free business-building videos and teleseminars that came across my timeline feed on Facebook as well as through CreativeLive.com. One immediate action I took was to create my CreativityMuse Facebook page at www.facebook.com/creativeproblemsolving. I will be developing that further and continuing to figure out how to use it as a business-growth tool as time goes on. I am also tweeting @creativitymuse and collecting articles from various blogs about creativity so I can start to think about what my unique point of view and public voice might be. Eventually I would like to blog or guest blog.

Developing the Offering

Outcome #1: Designing an introductory class.

Once the 4-week workshop was off the table, I considered other possibilities for how I could incorporate my new learnings and present them in this project. I concluded that a 1-day workshop was achievable and would give me the in-person experience and feedback I desired.

The first process challenge was how to condense my curriculum from four-weeks to three hours. I prioritized what I felt were the most important CPS elements I needed to convey and considered the type of environment and experiences I wanted to create for the attendees.

My first line of reasoning was to think about what my most important experiences have been as a result of using this process. For me, the ability to reframe challenges has been profound, so I selected that piece as the centerpiece activity for the class. To prepare students to participate in that activity, I concluded that divergent thinking, convergent thinking and the use of Statement Starters (Miller et al., 2011) would also be necessary to teach.

In terms of the CPS process, the focus of the centerpiece exercise was the first portion called clarification. Clarification includes the actions of exploring a vision and formulating challenges as described in The Thinking Skills Model of CPS, (Puccio, Mance & Murdock, 2012). I believed that getting to that point would provide the participants with valuable skills as well as an experience of transforming a problem. The outcome of transforming a problem would give them something to go home with, think about and take action on. I also hoped that perhaps they would be inspired to sign up for my 4-week class to receive continued support in the process.

My next step was visualizing the flow of the day. I wanted to incorporate the principles of safety-experience-integration that I learned at Kripalu (Nelson & Lang, 2013) so I had to be sure to include certain elements such as:

1. Setting the space and making sure that the environment was welcoming. It had to be organized and comfortable. Participants needed to feel that their needs for comfort were met. I envisioned having a nice, branded workbook at every place setting as well.
2. Introductions-allowing each participant to introduce herself and describe why she was here.
3. Leading with my vulnerability, telling my story and setting the tone that this environment welcomes honest and open participation.
4. Fulfilling my project mandate of including movement based exercises as well as attempting to create a transformational exercise.

5. Taking inspiration from the Torrance Incubation Model (Torrance & Safter, 1999) of heightening anticipation, I asked the students to do an assignment before they arrived. I also decorated my walkway to the house with sidewalk chalk. I put a hopscotch board out, wrote “new thinking ahead” wrote out the statement starters and divergent and convergent thinking. I hoped that even a momentary exposure to these words and phrases would lodge in their consciousness and spark curiosity. See Appendix C.

The first three actions would support the safety piece and allow me to create a space that was also emotionally supportive so that the potential for deep work existed.

Outcome #2 Creating the workbook.

I had a very strong desire to augment my professional reputation by providing a branded workbook to accompany the course. I never had one before, and it has been a longstanding goal to create one. As luck would have it, I received a handout from another workshop that provided me with visual inspiration about how I could repurpose my logo and create an appealing layout for use in handouts. Working with the same designer who helped me with the postcards, we created graphic elements I could insert into a word document to create my branded workbook.

Layout in hand, I then set about writing the document.

Workbook sections:

1. Outline for the Afternoon
2. Introduction
3. Agreements for Participation
4. Goals for the Class
5. Skills and Activities
 - a) Divergent thinking
 - b) Convergent thinking
 - c) Statement starters

6. Activity: Formulate new challenge original exercise
7. Introduction to CPS including steps of CPS
8. Next Steps
9. Feedback questionnaire

See Appendix B for selected images of the workbook.

Outcome #3: Leading the workshop.

Five women attended the first Creative Core Introductory workshop. They ranged in age from 24-59. One had taken my 4-week course previously. The attendees did not know exactly what they signed up for but were attracted to the concept of new thinking around a personal issue or problem as the outcome of the course. The class was scheduled to last three hours and took place in my house around my dining room table. I have no art on the walls in there, so there are two large, blank areas for Brainstorming with Post-Its.

As planned, I prepared the space by setting everybody a place at the table that had a workbook, a Sharpie pen, a ballpoint pen and a Post-It pad. My intention was to generate the sensation that I set the table for a special occasion. In doing so I hoped to create a positive affect that would support the creative environment (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller & Staw, 2005). I also diffused essential oils of Lavender and Geranium, which have been shown to encourage interactions between strangers (Lobel, 2014). Down the center of the table, I laid out chenille stems (pipe cleaners) and chocolates. The small group, intimate setting, all female group felt like a gathering as much as a class. During my introduction to the class, I emphasized my core values of creativity, collaboration and fun. I repeatedly talked about the importance of everybody's inputs to everybody else. I related it to the brainstorming concept of building on ideas, that a thought you have or a comment made may not be the ultimate piece of advice for somebody but that it could feed another thought and that all ideas were welcome. Early on I encouraged fun

and playfulness by getting the group up, and out for an activity to learn about divergent thinking. The whimsy of they experience helped speed up the bonding process. They laughed, interacted and witnessed each other fumble but nobody was shamed or made to feel inferior. I think it was a good kickoff to the workshop. When we returned to our seats around the table, the mood was lighter, the energy was elevated and they interacted less like strangers waiting to see what happens and more like a unit embarking on an exploration together.

Outcome # 4: Testing new tools and experiences.

For the divergent exercise I adapted an exercise I experienced in another class. I chose it because it used voice and movement to help create a memory. It also satisfied my desire to get attendees up and interacting early in the class. I wanted to break barriers of separateness and self-consciousness to help move along the group formation stages to norming sooner than later.

(Nelson & Lang, 2013) (Tuckman's n.d.)

We stepped outside and stood in a circle around the word "divergent" I had written on the driveway. (Figure C1 in Appendix C) Each person had a sheet of folded paper that had one of the divergent rules on it. I asked them all to look their phrases and simultaneously say them out loud 3 times. Next, I introduced a simple rhythmic pattern of snapping and clapping they could follow. Once everybody caught on we went around the circle while each person took a turn saying their phrase out loud and pairing it with a movement. The circle then simultaneously mimicked their phrase and movement. We went around twice parroting everybody's phrase and movement. It was quite fun, and there was a good bit of laughter. The exercise easily led into my being able to talk about the concept of divergent thinking. I used the example of everyone choosing a unique movement as a sample of a divergent thought.

For convergent thinking, we moved over to the chalked word “convergent.” I simply spoke about convergence using an analogy of getting dressed. I described convergence as the way somebody would edit an outfit for the desired effect. This was appropriate as one of the participants was a costumer and could relate and build on the conversation. Plus, every woman can understand what it is like to dress for a certain occasion or effect and can appreciate how challenging it can be to tweak an outfit until it is just right and fulfills your objective.

The second exercise I tested was more comprehensive and experimental. Prior to class, I sent an email asking all the attendees to write about their problem/opportunity. I suggested they write in a stream of consciousness sort of way, including facts, data, vision, challenges and telling the whole thing as if they were talking to a good friend. I asked them to bring their writings to class. My plan was to put the all the pieces of paper into a basket and when the time came, each person would randomly pick out another’s story and read it. I theorized that having somebody else read would enable the author to hear her story from an objective point of view and possibly allow insights that may have been overlooked had she been engaged in telling her own story. The idea was to manufacture the familiar experience of listening to a friend’s problem and because of the detachment, being able to clearly see what the nature of the problem actually is. I wanted people to experience that for themselves by hearing their own words said to them in another’s voice.

Following each story, the whole group would brainstorm ideas and questions about what they just heard, write the ideas on Post-Its and put Post-Its up on the wall. (Figure C5)

Once all the readings and the subsequent ideas/questions were posted on the wall, everyone was invited to examine all of the post-its and apply stickers to five that felt most personally relevant. Then, each person collected the Post-Its they tagged and took them to their own section

of wall space. Next I asked them to consider the notes with the intention of identifying a theme they could restate into a simple phrase.

While seeing patterns, finding ideas to discuss and having insights, the participants were unable to generate a single sentence or two that summarized a clear challenge. This was slightly disappointing to me; however, it became a very engaging process to observe. What happened was that the group became invested in one and other's thinking and questioning and began to facilitate itself.

I got quiet and observed as they questioned and prodded and supported each other's thinking. I could see that each person had an insightful breakthrough and began to talk about things they could do differently however, I personally got caught up in trying to figure out what happened because the outcome of the exercise did not go according to my "plan."

What I learned from this experience is that teaching and learning are dynamic experiences that can generate a wide range of emotional responses in the leader as well as the participants. Something not going as planned does not mean that value was not delivered. Feeling scared, worried and out of control was part of my learning process. In his book, *The Skilled Facilitator*, Roger Schwarz talks about the challenging work of the facilitator having a great deal to do with the internal experience and how that can increase or decrease one's effectiveness with groups. (Schwarz, 2002). The ability to embrace that discomfort and not allow it to overwhelm me will serve me as I navigate this new endeavor of creation and discovery. I have just scratched the surface of what I will learn as a facilitator but am glad to know that the inner work challenges that I experienced are a natural and expected part of evolution.

SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS

Reflections on Process

When I stop and consider the trajectory of this process, I recognize that have I been working on this Master's Project since before I entered the program. I reread my entrance essay for the first time since I sent it off and felt moved by the vision and clarity of my desires. This project is an absolute fulfillment of that yearning which, when written 3 years ago, did not have a framework and could not be satisfactorily fulfilled it until now.

These quotes from my essay are particularly poignant to me: "By completing the program, I would like to achieve my goal of marketing myself as a "Creativity Catalyst," a person who works with businesses and/or individuals in order to consciously apply principles of creative problem solving." I then go on to say "creativity remains the most meaningful way to connect and have an authentic experience with others. The opportunity to hold a space or create an environment for others to let their minds go is a very high personal calling."

Reading these words, I felt tears of satisfaction and surprise well up inside. I found a way to answer that calling. I employed Creative Problem Solving without knowing it. This demonstrates the underlying validity of the process. The way we break it down and label it is manmade, but the underlying trajectory of the process is natural. Two years ago I would not have imagined that my work with others around creativity would be about teaching people how to think. I would have been limited to guiding people through arts, crafts, vision boards and the like. Presently, with the CPS format as my scaffolding, I can develop tools and exercises that may include those activities but are consciously created in the service of meaningfully moving a person forward in the process of problem solving. I will continue to explore how to incorporate movement into

exercises. I will also develop and market the multi-week format so that I can include all the exercises I want to.

My Relationship to Transformation

The idea of transformation is still meaningful to me. I originally named my workshop for it and yet I could not find a scholarly definition for it that fit. What I found was frequently tied to religious experience and that was not the direction I wanted to go in.

At the outset of this project, I decided to attend the Kripalu workshop about designing and leading transformational workshops because I hoped to get a definition there. I did not. I learned something about designing exercises that can generate insight and emotions that could shift a person's perspective and perhaps if it is deep and meaningful enough, they could change their life as a result.

I have attended many, many transformational workshops in my life. My experience of them is that they offer a big emotional high during the week or weekend, some good catharsis, and then they wrap up and you go home and back to your life. The enthusiasm or motivation lasts about a week or so and then inertia sets in, the further you get from the experience, the further the actual transformation gets away. As I set out to create my workshop, I was adamant that I did not want to perpetuate that experience. I wanted to create an offering that provided accountability over time so that incremental change could be supported. That is why I designed a multi-week format.

I have come to believe that transformational insights can take place in a flash but living them is a different story. We are all stuck in the physical realm constrained by time, habits, rituals, families, jobs, cravings, etc. In my opinion and experience, conscious transformation takes time, support and continued attention to that goal.

The way I see it transformation can be externally instigated; something happens, and your life stops being the same, so you adapt. (i.e., a car accident that disables you, death of a loved one, illness) Alternatively, internal: you want to stop being the same in your life and decide to change and actually take the steps and do the work to do so, and that transforms your life. (i.e. get sober, change a career, enjoy your life more.) For the purposes of my workshop, working with people who have made the decision to generate transformation based on an internal drive, are likely the people I will be targeting. That population is a realm I am most familiar with.

All this is to say that I decided to forego researching a definitive definition of transformation in favor of focusing on generating results that people can label and declare as their personal experience of transformation. I had a conversation with a woman who holds a Ph.D. in Transformative Studies and I asked her how she defines transformation. She said “I like to keep it loose, to me transformation means change.” (Constance Scharff, personal communication, March 23, 2015) That works for me.

It is my experience that following the CPS process, submitting to it fully and taking the actions that one comes up with will generate transformation. My job as the facilitator is to keep guiding and supporting them on the path they have chosen.

Asking for Help and Getting Specific with my Needs

One lesson that I have had to learn is that I need to be specific about the type of help and outcome I am seeking. I have a tendency to trust people’s expertise somewhat blindly and, as a result, do not get the results that I envisioned. Part of this is a learning process because I learn what to ask for by identifying what is not satisfactory about the results. However, by becoming specific and developing the ability to communicate my vision from the outset, I may increase the likelihood of getting what I want the first time around.

An example of this situation is that I asked somebody to help me document the class. I desired some high-quality photographs that would capture the set-up, feeling and spirit and me in action. What I got was a few photos mostly of my dog and some flowers. In retrospect what I should have said was that I wanted photos of the pavement outside, the group in action, some shots of me and the Post-It's on the wall.

Another example that occurred is that I signed up for a costly year-long coaching program before I realized how much good information is available for free online. In retrospect, I would have asked more questions inquiring about the type of outcome and product results that might be generated by working with them. I got caught up in the emotions of the moment and the fear I felt about not knowing how to get my workshop business going. These are just reminders for me about the nature of my impulsivity, my reluctance to state my needs up front (see above) and not wanting to appear demanding or controlling. I see though that a bit of vigilance, some broader communication and taking a moment to ask questions could serve me in the long run.

Getting Out of My Comfort Zone

I learned that as much as I want to be out leading classes, I had a great deal of fear and resistance to declaring it publicly. I did not want to post on Facebook about my classes; I did not want to put it out to the public in general, and I hit a wall. The process of deciding to go to the Fun, Fabulous and Feminine women's weekend with the mindset that I am already doing workshops. Showing up professionally-dressed and armed with my nice postcard helped me turn a corner to feeling more confident and worrying less about what people think of me. I followed up by joining an online community and putting the class out there. I publicly stated that I was looking for women to take my class. That felt like a real stretch for me.

With the help of a friend, I confronted my anxieties, my fear of being judged, of coming up short of whatever other imaginary things I was worried about. Talking it through with her helped me push through the wall of do something bold or stay where you are. I realized that the people whom I was worried about judging me have relevance in my day to day life and that I had already started to create this new persona. I dove in and posted online. I got good responses, and that buoyed me to take the additional actions of posting my class on my timeline and of setting up a business page on Facebook. Forthcoming will be a website. I am also on Twitter as @creativitymuse.

Students are Teachers

I had some frustration in the Kripalu class because the way the leaders led felt passive. I wanted hard information, and it was not forthcoming. They designed the course as an immersive experiential process with a pinch of lecture thrown in. It did not feel like enough for me because I came there with an agenda. I was looking for answers. What I experienced aside from my frustration, were moments of great insight and learning that occurred as a result of the frequent group debriefs and integrations that took place. I learned a lot from listening to how my fellow students interpreted and felt differently about certain experiences than I did. This was the cause of a major insight for me: The teacher is not responsible for providing all the learning. Students teach each other as well. The room is full of wisdom.

I relied on the veracity of this insight when during my workshop, the final exercise was not wrapping up as I envisioned. My goal was for everyone to have a neatly rephrased question at the end of the day. That was not happening. I found myself withdrawing and considering how I could make it happen and also wondering why, where had I gone wrong. What occurred as I stepped back was that the participants stepped in and interacted and questioned and guided one

and other. Being cognizant as I was, I allowed it to happen and encouraged it. On the one hand I was frustrated by the exercise not tying up in the pretty bow I wanted, on the other hand, I was engaged in watching the dynamic sharing that was taking place. I asked everybody as their turn to share completed if they got something or saw something new and they did. My revelation was that, even though, the result looked different than what I wanted it to be, the participants still had results that they deemed satisfying. I can say this with certainty based on the verbal and written feedback I collected.

Act as If

This concept was driven home to me when on one of the feedback forms when somebody wrote that it would be better if “I did not put myself down or say things that undermined my authority” in the process of leading the class. There was a couple of times during the day when I felt lost, and I guess I said as much out loud.

I am reminded of musician friends who, while performing, know they messed up and played a wrong note or actors who flubbed a line but the show moves on, and the audience is none the wiser. The point is that I need not reveal every time I feel stumped or uncertain. I can take a breath, throw it back to the group or do my best to make something up that will serve the same or similar purpose. There is an old antiperspirant commercial that says “never let ‘em see you sweat” (Doucette, 2012) and I will attempt to adopt a more stoic attitude. However, as I write this it begs the question of differences between allowing a group to see your vulnerability for the purposes of example, tone setting or generating empathy and mood versus allowing them to see your vulnerability as a leader. My first thought is that intention makes the difference. When I use vulnerability up front as part of a story, it has a purpose and a plan, whereas the other in-the-moment feelings of uncertainty might create feelings of instability or uncertainty in the

participants. They rely on the leader to drive the vehicle to the intended destination. If the driver is lost, then by default, they are too, and that is not a safety-inducing situation.

Not CPS but Inspired by CPS

Feeling frustrated that my exercise did not produce the exact result I wanted, I was contemplating what went wrong? Where had I gone off the rails in the process? The answer I came to was that I had not been following the CPS process exactly in the first place. I took an inspiration from CPS and created an exercise that conflated a few steps. Therefore, the outcome did not give me the clean result I wanted. Afterwards, it occurred to me that I was not teaching CPS at that point but that I had created a different process. The outcomes were useful and insightful (as evidenced by feedback) even if they were not what I initially intended. I made my own curriculum and it served the purpose of teaching some tools and offering the experience of changing one's point of view of a situation however, it was not a by book rendition of a CPS session. It was a process inspired by CPS and designed to deliver an experience of transformed thinking using some thinking tools.

Sensitivity- How People Feel About What You Are Asking Them to Do

My big exercise of the day relied on people's willingness to allow others to read their words. I had not considered the level of vulnerability and trust that would require-particularly of the person whose words were the first to be read. When I announced the exercise and picked a paper, the girl recognized her handwriting and became worried and embarrassed. She was initially reluctant to allow another to read it out loud. That was a very important moment for me because I realized that I had totally overlooked that potentiality. I had not warned people that what they were writing would be read out loud, let alone by another person. I was fortunate that with a little cajoling and comforting, everybody ultimately agreed to participate. However, it was

tentative at first, and that was a big oversight on my part. The brainstorming that came out of those readings was the favorite part of the workshop, but the experience gave me pause as I consider using that exercise in the future.

I am unsure what I will do next time. The benefits of the vulnerability, intimacy, mutual support and ideas that came from the exercise served the process. I am worried that telling people up front, when I ask them to do the writing, that it will be shared will cause them to edit and leave out important pieces.

The agreements of the class state that anyone can opt out of an activity that makes them uncomfortable. In that case, somebody could choose not to have their words read, and that would be fine. An alternative approach could be to ask them to read their own redacted version, sharing whatever feels comfortable. In terms of the exercise, an edited version would convey the gist of the problem if not the gory little details that the writer holds dear. The listeners could certainly generate ideas based on a less comprehensive version but some vital nugget that breaks it open could be missed.

I am reminded of another important learning that occurred for me at Kripalu. Prior to leading an experimental and experiential exercise I had crafted, I was talking with the teacher about my concern about my ability to generate the insight I was trying to convey through the exercise. I wanted it to be a big-reveal moment when “they got it.” The teacher suggested that I would be more effective if I began the process by telling my story and leading with my vulnerability. I did not want to do that because I did not want to spoil the surprise of the wonderful insight I was trying to gift them with as a result of my exercise. In deference to the teacher’s experience, I trusted her guidance and opened with my story, vulnerability, and insight. The outcome was that the comments I got back universally said that my vulnerability up front gave them permission to

go deep into their own processes and learnings. They appreciated the insight I conveyed even though it was not as earth shattering to them as it was to me when I had it.

I am considering that for the purposes of transformational workshops, the divulgence of vulnerability for learning trumps the power of surprise. Thinking along the lines of the “safety first” philosophy of creating a safe container for an experience, it makes sense to me.

Feedback from the class

The feedback from the class was positive. People enjoyed the day and said that they experienced having a different take on their problems. The most popular exercise was the converging on all the Post-Its on the wall. I found that interesting. I thought they would say that the reframing part was the most favorite, but that was not the case. Unfortunately, I did not find out why that was the favorite element to them.

I was a little disappointed that they did not choose the story part as a favorite part. In conversation they agreed that it did cause a more unified feeling to the group. When the first gal, the youngest of the group, felt so shy about having her piece read all the other ladies swooped in like mother hens to assure her that whatever she was feeling was not unique or silly. I think that allowed her to experience a great deal of support, however, when I spoke to her a few days later, she reported that “she couldn’t relate” to them because they were older.

It reminds me that we can never truly know what is going on inside a person’s head. Even if they are appearing to be engaged and having a good time they could be thinking the opposite. That being said, she did find it a very valuable experience. One of the elements I tried to emphasize in my introduction and safety rules was that the class is a collaborative process and that we would be supporting each other and that emotional safety was paramount. I feel that everyone took that mandate on and thus a warm environment existed.

Learn how to sell

I do not like to sell; I do not like to be a self-promoter. These are problematic states of mind when one is a sole proprietor and the face and the product of the business. I made a big stretch at the end of the 3-hour workshop when I talked about the 4-week class and even meekly offered a special to people who signed up there. I will need to develop and refine that effort so that it feels more natural and generates more interest.

I hate to be sold to. I need to figure out my way of talking about my work and making it available so that people want to buy it. It is an opportunity for me to transform my relationship to sales. I want people to sign up; I want to lead classes, and I want to get paid to do it. This is one area of serious challenge and serious growth for me. Maybe some of it will resolve organically as I gain experience and see consistent feedback, however, I do also feel some specific advice and instruction from an expert could be helpful.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Present and Future

What Creativity Means to Me Now

When I started this program, I only knew in a visceral way that I wanted creativity to be the center of my life. I did not know what that meant as I was not an artist or writer or someone who thought they could make her living in the arts. All I knew was that the word “creativity” was my beacon. I found this program with a Google search “graduate programs in creativity” I had no idea what to expect but I knew that an advanced degree and creativity were both important to me. When I found the Buffalo State College Masters in Creativity and read about it, I did not understand it. The description talked about Creative Problem Solving, and I had no idea what that actually meant. I Googled Creative Problem Solving, but I did not follow what I reading. I moved forward because everything else about the program, the low-residency, the timeline, the tuition, matched parameters that made it doable for me. My first two weeks in Buffalo were a whirlwind. I could not catch my breath or my bearings, and I was annoyed. I did not understand, I did not see the creativity, but I did see the potential for transformative thinking and that has been my anchor throughout this entire education and this project experience. What I know about creativity now that I didn’t know then is that it is learnable, it is trainable and I don’t have to know how to draw or sing. In fact doing those things poorly becomes half the fun because it is about exploration, making connections and finding answers hidden in questions.

Today, creativity is my toolkit. It is my approach to life, and it is one I can share. I can lead another on a path, through a process so that they can experience their own magical awakening. People would say to me “you are so creative” and I loved the sentiment, but I did not understand what they were talking about because I was not artistic. Today, I think they were saying that they

saw how I saw the world as a place of possibility, a place of fun and a playground where we can look at life and circumstances as malleable, combinable, discoverable experiences and opportunities. I understand a creative leader to be one who is the stand for that approach and one who can guide others to think through a process that starts one place and ends somewhere else. My workshop is a microcosm of everything that I have learned. I hope it expands and grows into an empire that delivers creative thinking and personal empowerment.

Preliminary Next Steps

As my formal educational process winds down, I am compelled to look forward and dream about how I can use my new education. The first area of my focus is answering the question of how to build my business? I have decided to focus on building the CreativityMuse brand by developing and marketing my Creative Core workshop. There are many steps I will be taking to do that. First steps include the basics of building a website, honing in on my message, identifying my unique value proposition and learning how to use social media to attract clients. I am also thinking about creating workshops tailored to specific populations and then training the people who work with those populations, but that is a longer term goal.

Incorporating Movement

One piece I was very interested in when I started was incorporating movement into my workshops. I did a very small amount with my divergent exercise but in the longer course I aspire to create more exercises that are at least partially body based. As Lobel (2014) wrote about, the somatic experience informs the mind whether we realize it or not. I want to incorporate that intelligence into the work. As a former bodyworker, I am familiar with how the body can store emotion. I speculate that by incorporating movement work that is effective, I can

help create another layer of opening to the unconscious that might help the creative process along.

Overall Evaluation

My overall evaluation of my project is one of great success. What I now have in place are a three-hour introductory workshop, branded workbook, promotional flyer, a Facebook page for my business, a community of people who know me as a workshop leader and want to support my work, business coaches who will help me through the next phase of growth and discovery, ideas for more workshops and potentially some accompanying products. I will continue to explore the concept of transformation and look for ways of incorporating movement into the workshop experience. I will also stay connected to fellows from my cohort and look for ways to collaborate and stay inspired about this work and the myriad of ways it can be used to generate positive transformation for people and organizations alike.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Postcard

Figure A1

Front of Postcard

CreativityMuse
Clarify and Activate Your Success

■ Workshops
 ■ Facilitations
 ■ Presentations

CreativityMuse teaches creativity as a skill that can be learned and applied. The Creative Core foundation program delivers a reliable process with easy to learn tools. People who complete this training are better-equipped to transform challenges into uniquely solvable opportunities.

Why Creative Core Workshop?

Developing a strong mental creative core is as important as developing a strong physical core. Just like a trained body is agile and can respond quickly and move flexibly, a mind trained to think creatively is similarly skilled and can respond to creative challenges in a graceful and productive manner.

Creative Core Foundation Skills: Process, Tools and You

Using a question of your choice as the "weight" for your Creative Core strength training, you are guided through the fun and practical transformative process of applying creativity for new outcomes.

Who can benefit from Creative Core Workshop?

- **Anyone blessed with many skills and talents who is unsure about how to put it all together** in a way that is meaningful and fulfilling.
- **Anyone with a nagging uncertainty in the back of her mind, questioning life's purpose or what to do next-** this process helps to clarify and identify priorities and motivations and will generate plans that are personally meaningful and realistically actionable.
- **Anybody who likes to help others-** overcome pressure to "know" all the answers by learning collaborative skills that expand thought horizons and engage in "solution finding partnerships."
- **Parents or managers charged with giving feedback-** learn a simple and powerful tool for providing feedback in a positive manner that keeps the lines of communication open and the project moving forward.

Contact (323) 206-6131 or vivian@creativitymuse.com

Figure A2

Back of Postcard

Creative Core Workshop

Class format: Four once-a-week meetings. *Class 1* is a 6-hour retreat-style day to learn the tools and generate your personalized plan. *Classes 2-4* are 2-hours each and provide each participant with the time needed for review, new skill-building and discussion for forward momentum. (One day workshops also available—please let us know if you are interested in that format)


Features

- Personalized instruction and practice using a valid, reliable and fun process
- Small groups that allow each participant to be seen, heard and supported
- Formatted to encourage integration of skills as well as personal accountability and follow through
- Multiple learning styles engaged with upbeat, interactive exercises and creative activities

Benefits:

- Work with personally meaningful questions in a safe, collaborative environment
- Renewed excitement for life by making new connections and envisioning fresh possibilities
- Feel empowered as you apply new thinking skills in support of your own and others' creativity
- Rut-busting—implement new ideas, plans and solutions to break out of ruts—both personal and professional

For next start date please call (323)206-6131 or email Vivian@creativitymuse.com



Instructor: Vivian Geffen, founder of CreativityMuse, holds a SUNY Graduate Certificate in Creativity and Change Leadership as well as a Master's of Science in Creativity from Buffalo State College. This work is the fulfillment of her creative process and the answer to her desire for a unique career that supports others' creativity. Known for her ability to ask just the right question to shed new light on problems, she enjoys working with small businesses, entrepreneurs and individuals in transition. This process has helped her develop and sell stories for a children's television show. She also facilitates strategic planning sessions in her service on the Board of Directors for The Samburu Project, a non-profit that provides water and agricultural projects in Kenya. Her background includes running a business for 20 years, event planning, writing, as well as many years in various areas of the performing arts. She is a member of ATD and is certified to administer the Basadur Creative Problem Solving Profile. She Tweets @CreativityMuse

Appendix B: Workbook Selections

Figure B1

Creative Core Workbook Cover

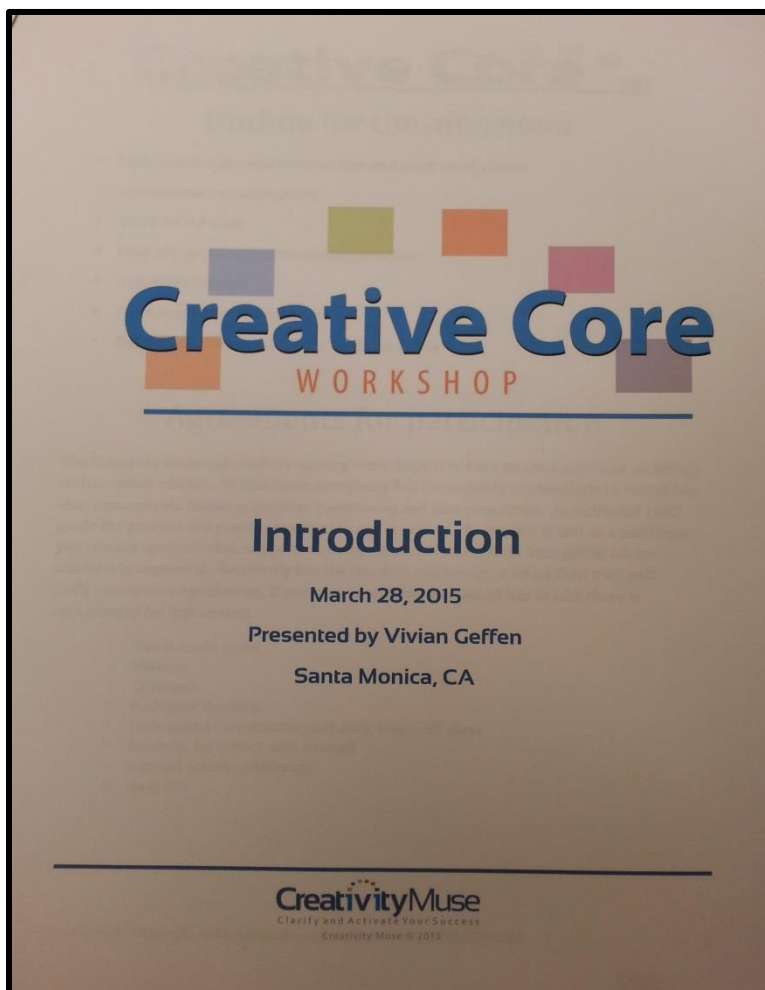



Figure B2

Goals for Class Page




Goals for Class

- Learn skills Divergent and Convergent thinking and recognize when/how to use them each
- Learn Statement Starters: How to (H2), How might (HM), What might be all the ways (WMBAW)
- Learn the concept of formulating a challenge and have an experience of doing that.
- Complete the afternoon with new energy or new perspective on the situation you brought in.
- Generate next step plan of action that works for you-i.e. sign up for 4 week Creative Core class, ideas of people to contact, area of research etc.

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Figure B3

Skills and Activities Page



Skills and activities for today

A. Divergent Thinking-Name intro game and Divergence rules game
 B. Convergent Thinking-
 C. Statement Starters- Practice
 D. Clarify and restate

A. Concept 1: Divergent Thinking

Divergent Thinking: Generate options, open minded, first draft-everything on the page, free-association, riffing, going broad

Attitudes and behaviors that support Divergence

1. Defer Judgment: whatever comes to mind go with it don't evaluate
2. Strive for quantity: The more ideas you have the greater the chances of getting a good one. Push through the first easy ones and keep going
3. Seek wild and unusual ideas: Freewheel, the wilder the better, Osborn said it's easier to tame a wild idea than to invigorate a weak one
4. Build on other ideas: Build, combine and improve ideas

Tools for divergent thinking include: brainstorming, forced connections, word dance, excursions

B. Concept 2: Convergent Thinking

Convergent Thinking: Converging is the partner of divergence. Once you have diverged thoroughly, it is time to assess, interpret, refocus and discern what has potential to be developed and what to leave behind.

Attitudes and behaviors that support effective Convergence

1. Be affirmative, ask what is good about this idea before simply deciding "no!" Look for what you want, not just what you don't want.
2. Be deliberate: Keep your original goal in mind, watch out for "glittery" ideas that might take you in another direction. In the face of many good options allow your original objective to be your guide.
3. Improve ideas: Not all ideas are workable solutions. Even promising ones take energy to be honed, strengthened, and developed.
4. Consider novelty: Be brave, contemplate original thinking, consider ways to trim, tailor, tweak or rework something out there but with a kernel of something.

Tools for convergence include: Highlighting, restating, Card sort, Targeting

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APPENDIX C: Photos

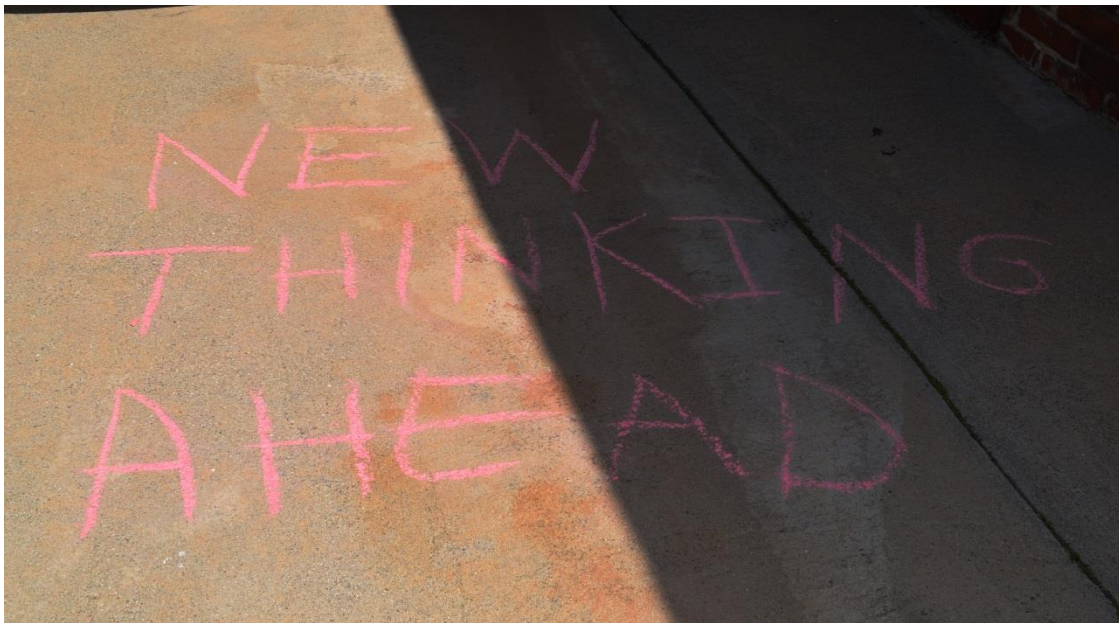
Figure C1

Divergent Thinking Exercise



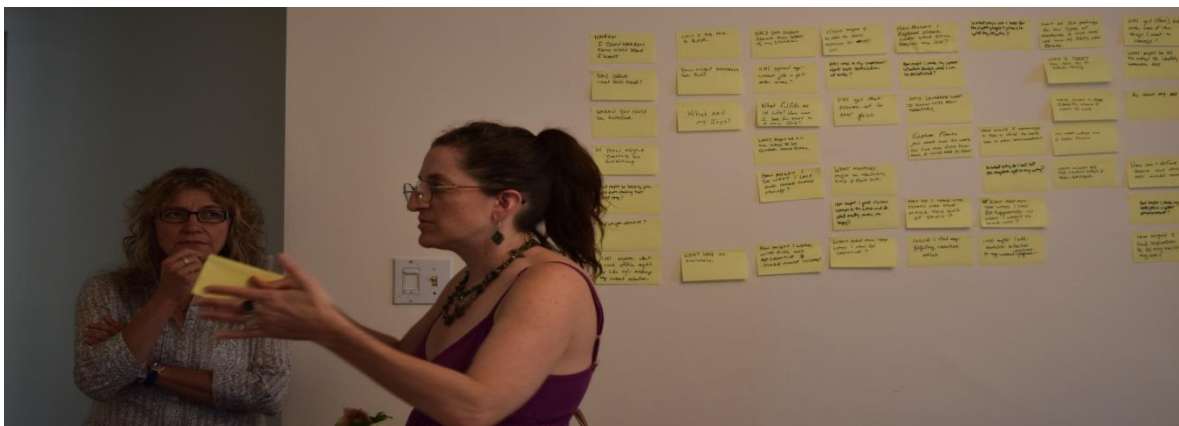
Figures C2 & C3

Heightening Anticipation



Figures C4, C5 & C6

Class in Process



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Vivian Geffen

5/5/2015

Date