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In Memoriam

Ruth Brendel Noller (October 6, 1922 – June 3, 2008)

Dr. Ruth Noller was a long-time friend and colleague of all of us at the Center for Creative Learning. Our colleague, Dr. Scott Isaksen, prepared this essay for Creative Learning Today.

Although the passing of Ruth Noller on June 3rd saddened so many, those of us who knew and worked with Ruth have been blessed with many fine and lasting memories. Having known and loved Ruth in many roles since 1970, I shall highlight a few key accomplishments and a small part of her rich legacy.

As a teacher. Ruth taught Creative Studies classes at Buffalo State College. Her support and involvement in the field started in 1965 when she attended the CPSI program in Buffalo. I met her in my first Creative Studies class and will always remember that she introduced herself as Ruth, not Dr. Noller. Ruth found many ways to challenge her students. We all had to write 13 two-page papers based on a series of readings in the field. I wrote and submitted my first paper during a Tuesday class. On Thursday, Ruth returned our papers. I was in for a big shock. She had written more in pencil on my paper than I had typed. She read each paper carefully, providing comments, questions, and corrections on each one. From then on, I put a great deal more thought into my reading and writing for her class!! What a way to help us take our work more seriously...



As a mentor. Ruth was a worldclass mentor. In her office Ruth welcomed spontaneous visits from her students. I found myself visiting regularly to discuss the papers, class, or life in general. Our mentoring relationship had begun. Later in the year she invited me to help with the Creative Problem Solving Institute and to meet her family. Her genuine caring and interest, unconditional acceptance, and especially the sparkle in her eyes during conversations created a huge level of respect for her almost awe. The more I learned about Ruth, the more my admiration grew. Since Ruth's retirement in 1982 she described our relationship as co-mentoring since we were working more as colleagues. Her writing and thinking about mentoring has left a rich legacy.

As a leader. Ruth's leadership was evident in a variety of settings She was heavily involved in planning and administering many CPSI programs including the Leadership Development Program. She served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Creative Behavior*, and was

actively engaged in presentations and lectures in the U.S. and abroad. Ruth was a model of facilitative leadership in all her work.

As a scholar. Ruth's career was a journey of discovery and service. Using her mathematical and programming skills, Ruth assisted Sid Parnes in the development and testing of instructional materials for Creative Problem Solving. She wrote clearly and thoughtfully, helping thousands of people understand creative behavior. She advised students, served on many doctoral committees (including mine), and wrote on subjects she cared about—such as her passion about mentoring as a special form of facilitative leadership. She was instrumental in helping to conduct and disseminate the results of the Creative Studies Project and had a keen interest in women in leadership roles.

Ruth never sought the spotlight. Most of her contributions were done in a quiet and competent manner, often serving as the number two – behind the scenes. For those of us who knew her, Ruth has influenced us in a deep and lasting way. Our lives have been enriched through her pioneering efforts and now we must continue our own journeys – in light of her marvelous example. Dee Young and Joette Field (2004) have written a wonderful article that provides more detail about Ruth's contributions and life. I recommend it. (Young, D., & Field, J. (2004). Ruth B. Noller: From musician to mentor. Journal of Creative Behavior, 38, 217-219).

This issue's Table of Contents is on the back cover.

Problem Solving Style and Multicultural Personality Dispositions

By: Claudia Burger, Cherylynn Marino, Joseph Ponterotto, and John Houtz Fordham University

Fifty-one graduate psychology students were administered *VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style* (Selby, Treffinger, Isaksen 2002; Selby, Treffinger, Isaksen, & Lauer, 2004) and *The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (*MPQ*) (Ponterotto, et. al., 2007; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven (2000).

Participants ages ranged from 22 to 75, with a mean of 26.7 and standard deviation of 8.7. There were 45 women and 6 men. Five racial groups were included but 71% of participants were white.

VIEW assesses three dimensions of problem solving style: Orientation to Change (OC), Manner of Processing (MP), and Ways of Deciding (WD). VIEW consists of 34 items, with 18 corresponding to the OC dimension, 8 corresponding to the MP dimension, and 8 more corresponding to the WD dimension. Directions call for respondents to consider the stem, "When I am solving problems, I am a person who prefers..." for each of the items. The items consist of paired opposite statements that continue the stem (e.g. "thinking aloud about ideas" paired with "thinking quietly about ideas"). In between the two statements are seven circles. Possible scores on the OC dimension range from 18 to 126 (Explorer to Developer) with a theoretical mean of 72, and the MP and WD dimension scores can both range from 8 to 56 (External to Internal and Person to Task) with a theoretical mean of 32. Reliabilities of VIEW are reported to range in the high .80s to low .90s. Construct validity for VIEW is demonstrated with correlations to other style, creativity, and personality measures.

The MPQ is a 91-item 5-point Likert-type self-report measure designed to assess five dimensions: Cultural Empathy (18 items), Open-mindedness (18 items), Social Initiative (17 items), Emotional Stability (20 items), and Flexibility (18 items). Reliabilities for the MPQ have ranged from the mid .60s to low .90s across the five scales. Evidence for construct validity has been established by correlations with other personality measures.

Partial correlations among *VIEW* and *MPQ* scores were computed, controlling for age and gender. Among *VIEW* scores, only the correlation between OC and WD was significant (r = .345, p < .05), suggesting that a Developer style and Task-oriented style were positively related as were an Explorer style and Person-oriented style.

Among *MPQ* scales, there were numerous significant correlations. Table 1 presents these. Each dimension except Emotional Stability was intercorrelated.

Table 2 presents the partial correlations among VIEW and MPQ scores, controlling for age and gender. Correlations with OC suggest that an Explorer style, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility are positively related. Correlations with MP suggest that External style, social initiative, and flexibility are positively related. There were no significant relationships observed between problem solving style and cultural empathy or between Ways of Deciding and multicultural personality orientation.

As with other studies involving participants from this setting, participants tested more Developerstyle than the hypothetical mean on the OC scale (Mean = 81.6 vs. 72; SD = 16.6 vs. 18). Means on the MP and WD *VIEW* dimensions were much closer to the hypothetical means (Means = 32.4 and 28.8, SDs = 9.9 and 7.6, respectively, compared to means = 32 and SDs = 8, respectively).

Results of this study provide additional evidence of the construct validity of *VIEW* and the importance of further efforts to understand different styles of behavior. One disappointing result was the lack of significance with the Ways of Deciding dimension. *VIEW* theory would have suggested a correspondence between a Person-oriented style and greater cultural empathy.

On the 5-point MPQ Likert scales, the means were at or above the scale midpoints. Table 3 presents these data. Such scores are not surprising, given the participants involved. They are students in graduate psychology programs, from several ethnic backgrounds, in a multicultural city, in programs that stress issues of multiculturalism. The very high mean (and corresponding "restriction of range") on Cultural Empathy may help to explain the absence of correlation with problem solving style. More research is warranted.

Table 1. Partial Correlations Among MPQ Scales, Controlling for Age and Gender

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Cultural Empathy 2 Open-mindedness 3 Social Initiative 4 Emotional Stability 5 Flexibility (*p < .05; ** p < .01	-	.51** -	.44** .47** -	13 .06 .15 -	.27* .53** .43** .52**

Table 2: Partial Correlations Among VIEW and MPQ Scales, Controlling for Age and Gender

	Orientation to Change	Manner of Processing	Ways of Deciding
Cultural Empathy	24	12	21
Open-mindedness	44**	13	10
Social Initiative	32*	35**	.07
Emotional Stability	31*	15	.11
Flexibility	64**	34*	02
*p < .05; ** p < .01			

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for MPQ Scales

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Cultural Empathy	4.24	.47	1.67	4.89
Open-mindedness	3.72	.47	2.61	4.78
Social Initiative	3.59	.53	2.41	4.65
Emotional Stability	3.05	.46	1.90	4.00
Flexibility	3.08	.56	2.06	4.06

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International Group of VIEW Users Gathers in Sarasota

Nearly two dozen VIEW users from four countries gathered at the Holiday Inn at Lido Beach in Sarasota from January 9-11 for the 3rd Annual International Networking Conference. The participants enjoyed numerous opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with other experienced VIEW practitioners, and to discuss ideas and emerging work with VIEW's three authors (Ed Selby, Don Treffinger, and Scott Isaksen).

In addition to discussing "best practices" for using VIEW, participants also had several opportunities to hear about and discuss new and recently completed research projects in which VIEW was studied with diverse audiences from high school students to veteran New York harbor pilots! Early morning and after-lunch breaks provided opportunities for participants



to enjoy the beautiful Gulf of Mexico setting, relaxing poolside, strolling on the beach, or maintaining a watchful eye for dolphins in the Gulf. Evenings provided opportunities for fellowship over dinner, strolling the shops at St. Armand's Circle (within walking distance of our hotel), and plenty of time for informal, small group networking.

The 4th Annual Conference will return to Sarasota January 7-9. 2009. If you're already a VIEW user, we hope you will plan now to join the group. If you are interested in becoming qualified to use VIEW, you will have a special opportunity to participate in a VIEW Advanced Training Progream on January 5-6, 2009, and then stay for the Networking Conference at a special "combined" rate. Contact the Center for Creative Learning office for more information.

New Problem-Solving Style Publication!

An Introduction To Problem-Solving Style

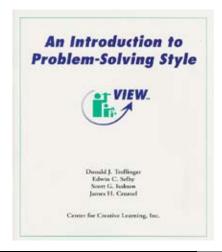
By Donald J. Treffinger, Edwin C. Selby, Scott G. Isaksen, & James H. Crumel

This booklet provides a concise, practical overview of problem-solving style. It outlines the nature of problem-solving style (based on extensive theory and research), explaining in clear, non-technical language what problem-solving styles are— and are not— and describes three problem-solving style dimensions and six styles. Drawing on the authors' research with more than 12,000 people, from ages 12 – 80 in more than 16 countries,

the book explains the important and unique personal characteristics and implications, benefits, and risks of each style. In addition, the book discusses: the implications of style for effective problem solving; the importance of style for group composition, teamwork, and enhancing work relationships; and, the unique ways the three style dimensions interact with each other. This book is a valuable resource for building self-understanding and for all teams, groups, or organizations that are concerned with effective leadership, teamwork, solving problems, and managing change.

(2007; 34 pp., paperbound). Order #1045.

Note: Discounts are available for quantity purchases of this title.



Funding Opportunities for Educators

In this column, we provide information about new opportunities for grants for educators. We hope that you may be interested in applying to these sources for projects that will enhance your ability to implement CPS, talent development, or style effectively in your setting, or to participate with the Center in collaborative research projects. We are always happy to assist you in developing proposals for such projects.

Toshiba Grants for Math and Science

The Toshiba America Foundation makes grants for projects in math and science designed by classroom teachers to improve instruction for students in grades K-12. Maximum Award: \$10,000. Eligibility: Grades K-12. Deadline: Decisions about grants under \$5,000 (K-6: \$1,000) are made on a rolling basis and applications are accepted throughout the year. Deadline for large grants grades 7-12: August 1, 2008.

http://www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp

McCarthey Dressman Education Foundation Accepting Applications for Academic Enrichment and Teacher Development Grants

Headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah, this Foundation was created in recognition of the struggle educators often face in bringing truly exceptional teaching to their students. The foundation awards grants to those projects and/or initiatives with significant potential to augment the educational experiences for youth of all backgrounds. The foundation is now accepting applications for its Academic Enrichment Grants and Teacher Development Grants. Academic Enrichment Grants are designed to develop in-class and extracurricular programs that improve student learning. These grants seek to maximize innovation and results in classrooms and education departments by funding programs that nurture the intellectual, artistic, and creative abilities of children from low-income households. Successful applicants may receive grants of up to \$10,000 each per year for a maximum of three years. Teacher Development Grants seek to increase the effectiveness of individual educators and small teams of teachers by funding the formation and implementation of groundbreaking K-12 classroom instruction. Grantees may be awarded amounts of up to \$10,000 each per year for a maximum of three years. The program provides opportunities for teachers to integrate fresh strategies that encourage critical inquiry and to observe the effect of those strategies on students. Teachers have the opportunity to reflect and write about their projects and to share their observations with other teachers. Eligibility requirements, program overviews, and applications are available at the foundation's Web site.

http://www.mccartheydressman.org/

The Verizon Foundation

The Verizon Foundation funds projects to improve education, family safety and health care through technology, focusing on partnerships that replicate successful community programs in: education, literacy, domestic violence prevention, technology for health care and health care accessibility. : Unsolicited proposals are reviewed continuously from January 1 through November 1, and are accepted only via email. Funds for 2008 are \$68 million for grants that range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each. The foundation receives roughly 60,000 applications a year and funds fewer that half. For more information visit: http://foundation.verizon.com/about/community.shtml

The Allstate Foundation

The Allstate Foundation supports national and local programs that fit within three focus areas. Proposals for program support must address needs within one of the three focus areas to be considered for funding: safe and vital communities, in which programs should address catastrophe response, youth anti-violence, neighborhood revitalization, or teen safe driving; economic empowerment (financial and economic literacy, insurance education, or empowerment for victims of domestic violence); or tolerance, inclusion and diversity (teaching tolerance to youth, ending hate crimes, or alleviating discrimination). The deadline is open. The website is: http:// www.allstate.com/foundation/funding-guidelines.aspx



How Do We Know that Creative Problem Solving Works?

By Dr. Ed Selby and Dr. Don Treffinger

Creativity and Creative Problem Solving (CPS) have long been popular components of gifted and talented programs. However, if someone asks, "How do you know that teaching CPS works, or has any valuable impact or effects," how will you respond? In this article, we'll provide a brief summary of work that can guide your response. Research and development on creativity supports the clear conclusion that all people can potentially be creatively productive (Davis, 2004; Sawyer, 2006) and that with training they can move closer to fulfilling that potential (Torrance, 1962; 1987). Niu and Sternberg (2003, p. 112) suggested that educators "engage in more creative activities and actively guide their children on how to be creative. Like teaching basic skills, teaching creativity and creative thinking strategies should also be included in their educational practice." Schack (1993) examined the effects of a creative problem-solving curriculum with 320 gifted, honors, and average level middle school students from 6 schools. The trained students demonstrated significant gains in creative thinking, but there were no significant differences among ability levels, which implied that all students can benefit from the process skills taught in creative problem solving.

The Creative Problem Solving system (Isaksen, Dorval, & Treffinger, 2000; Treffinger, Isaksen, & Stead-Dorval, 2006) provides a framework that has been applied successfully in business and in education worldwide for more than five decades (Isaksen & Treffinger, 2004; Treffinger, 2003; Treffinger & Isaksen, 2005).

The Blumberg Center at Indiana State University trained 50 General Education Intervention (GEI) teams in the use of CPS process and tools (Buddle, 2003; Freeman, Wolfe, Littlejohn, & Mayfield, 2001; Walker, Bahr, Buddle, Littlejohn, & Miller, 2001). CPS trained school-based GEI teams, when compared with non-trained teams, produced lower rates on non-verifiable student referrals and developed more effective intervention plans for students placed in full-time special education classes.

McCluskey, Baker, Bergsgaard, & McCluskey (2001) reported on the successful application of CPS with at-risk and underserved students in Canada, including students who had dropped out of school entirely and others who were serving jail sentences. CPS proved powerful in enabling educators to deal effectively with previously "unreachable" students. The BEST Beginnings program (O'Hagan, Tymko, Timgren, McCluskey, & Baker, 1995), for example, included both parents and students in CPS training and resulted in increases in word knowledge and reading comprehension for participating students. The Second Chance project (Place, McCluskey, McCluskey, & Treffinger, 2000) found significantly reduced recidivism rates among youthful offenders, especially among young "First Nations" people (with recidivism rates over 90% for the control group but less than 40% for project graduates). The Lost Prizes project (McCluskey, Baker, O'Hagan, & Treffinger, 1995, 1998; McCluskey & Treffinger, 1998), in which CPS was a central component, focused on helping high-ability school dropouts. While the 84 students continued to be plagued by many of the environmental troubles associated with "at-risk" behavior, 57 returned to high

school, entered a post-secondary program, or secured employment. CPS enabled students to consider constructive alternatives, plan more effectively, and develop a personal vision for success skills, attitudes, and abilities they had never before considered plausible. The Lost Prizes students discovered non-adversarial ways to interact with teachers and other authority figures and ways to organize and activate their problem solving (e.g., Olenick, Terhoch, & Pawlyshyn, 1995); as one student wrote:

The CPS course was especially beneficial for me. For one thing, up until then my relationship with teachers had been largely adversarial. However, by taking this training with them, I found (in our group problem solving sessions) that we had many ideas in common... As well, CPS helped me consider a systematic, step-by-step process of problem solving. In school, I had always disliked and reacted against being constrained by rule-bound thinking. On the other hand, my thoughts were often scattered and misdirected – it seemed that I could never get anything done. I had ideas without focus or productivity. CPS proved to be an effective, yet flexible tool to help me organize and activate my problem solving, without restricting or confining it. (pp. 179-180).

Puccio, Murdock and Mance (2005) reviewed studies of creative problem solving in organizations from 1953 to the present and found that CPS training consistently had a positive impact on problem solving attitudes, behaviors, and effectiveness as well as a positive impact on employees' performance or work experience. Puccio, Firestien, Coyle and Masucci (2006) reviewed more than 50 research articles on the effectiveness of CPS training and

concluded that training allowed individuals to work more effectively, demonstrate increased openness for new ideas, and allow the time needed for idea development. Isaksen (2008) also reviewed more than 500 studies on CPS conducted over the past five decades. These studies documented the positive effects of numerous course and program evaluation studies, including 183 citations of experimental evidence and 70 citations of studies documenting the impact of specific courses.

Summing up, then, there is an extensive body of work that supports the usefulness, impact, and value of CPS. We are always interested in continuing to add to that evidence, especially through experimental studies with groups at various age levels. However, when you decide to incorporate CPS into your programs, we believe you can do so with considerable confidence.

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Dr. Ken McCluskey Named CCL Distinguished Research Fellow

Dr. Ken McCluskey, Professor of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg, Canada, has been named as a Center for Creative Learning **Distinguished Research Fellow.** His unanimous recognition by the Center's Board was announced on June 15, 2008 by Center Director, Dr. Donald Treffinger.



Dr. McCluskey holds both Masters and doctoral degrees in Psychology from the University of Manitoba, as well as certification as a teacher, coordinator, and counselor. Prior to his current positions at the University of Winnipeg, he has had 25 years of experience as a psychologist, special educator, and administrator in the public school system.

His work in the areas of creativity and talent devlopment for at-risk students, spanning more than two decades, has resulted in a more than 100 books, monographs, and journal articles, including articles for Gifted Child Quarterly, Gifted and Talented International, Reclaiming Children and Youth, Journal of Special Education, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Parenting for High Potential. He has contributed several articles to *Creative Learning Today.* Two of his books, *Lost Prizes*: Talent Development and Problem Solving with At-Risk Students and Enriching Teaching and Learning for Talent Development were published by the Center for Creative Learning, and included work carried out in collaboration with several of the Center's team members. Over the course of his career, Dr. McCluskey has also secured in excess of three million dollars in grants or contracts to support his research and service projects.

Dr. McCluskey's contributions, however, extend far beyond the academic or scholarly community; his programs have changed the lives of many young people and brought inspiration, encouragement, and practical guidance to educators on a worldwide basis. Internationally, Dr. McCluskey's work has taken him to institutions throughout the United States, the Caribbean, Australia, Mexico, England,

Thailand, Turkey, Spain, Russia, and India. As a result of his efforts, the Executive Council of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, an organization with delegates from 50 countries across the globe, selected the University of Winnipeg as its World Headquarters in 2005.

His collaboration with the Center dates back to early 1991, when he and several school-based colleagues were the first client group to work with us after our Center's doors opened in Sarasota. Since then, Dr. McCluskey and many of his associates have been frequent participants in our programs and networking conferences on CPS and talent development. Dr. Don Treffinger, Mr. Grover Young, Dr. Scott Isaksen, and Mr. Brian Dorval of the CCL Board and leadership team have also visited Manitoba on numerous occasions, and our collaborative training, presenting, research, and publication activities continue to represent an active partnership today.

In announcing his selection as a **Distinguished Research Fellow,** Dr. Treffinger reported that the Center's board wished to recognize Dr. McCluskey's exemplary leadership and service as a role model for scholars in the field. McCluskey's efforts and accomplishments also serve, the Board noted, as a witness to the benefits that research offers to educational practice and an inspiration for educators, affirming the importance and value of deliberate efforts to "bring out the best in all people" through CPS and talent development.

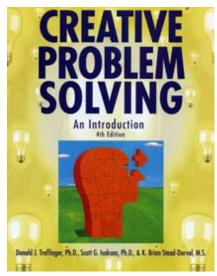
As a Distinguished Research Fellow, we will continue to look to Dr. McCluskey to advise and consult with the Center's leadership on research issues and opportunities, and to assist in formulating a Center Research Advisory Board. We know he will continue to be a vital and dynamic influence in bringing the message of the importance of CPS and talent development to new audiences around the world and to stimulate the development of new generations of leadership for the future.

Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction (4th Ed.)

By Donald J. Treffinger, Scott G. Isaksen, and K. Brian Dorval

This definitive guide shows you how to apply both creative and critical thinking to find successful solutions to everyday problems. Creative Problem Solving (CPS) can help you to approach problems and deal with change in a deliberative and constructive way, and consequently build your confidence and success in working with complex challenges.

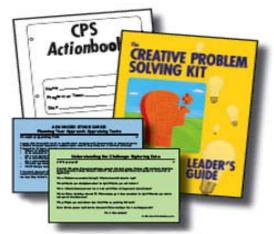
Written for both group leaders and individuals seeking a systematic way to build innovative and effective solutions, *Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction* is perfect for educational, business, and community groups. This best-selling introduction offers a concise, practical guide to the CPS process. **This revised and updated fourth**



edition includes: easy-to-follow instructions for using Creative Problem Solving; practical tools for understanding the challenge, generating ideas, and preparing for action; expanded guidelines for planning your approach to CPS; strategies that ensure successful group dynamics; the latest trends in creative thinking and group problem solving; practical suggestions for those new to Creative Problem Solving; and, guidelines for group facilitators. Used by thousands of group leaders seeking a friendly introduction to using CPS this book is a time-honored classic. Creative Problem Solving is based on more than five decades of extensive research, development, and field experience in educational settings, businesses, and many other organizations. If you're new to Creative Problem Solving, use this book for a concise but complete introduction to the basics of Creative Problem Solving. If you're an experienced Creative Problem Solver, use this book as an update of the recent advances in CPS that make the process even more natural, flexible, and "user-friendly" than ever before! *Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction* is also an excellent choice for use as a participant's textbook in introductory workshops, courses, training programs, or seminars.

The Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Kit

A Practical Tool for Learning and Applying CPS
By Donald Treffinger, Carole Nassab, Patricia Schoonover, Edwin Selby, Cindy Shepardson, Carol Wittig, and Grover Young.



This innovative kit offers an in-depth, hands-on approach to guide individuals and groups in learning and applying CPS. If you are new to CPS, the kit provides a practical, systematic way to learn the process and put it to use immediately. Experienced CPS users will find the kit helpful in organizing and managing process applications

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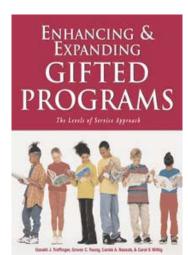
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Editor: Dr. Don Treffinger

Purpose: To share new ideas and practical strategies for productive thinking, and talent development, and learning style; information about and reviews of new resources; and opportunities for networking among our readers.

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