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The Journal of Organisational Creativity ISSN 2624-2850 is a multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, open-access online Journal publishing original articles relevant to the production of creative outcomes in organisations. We encourage both conceptual and empirical research-based articles that include strong implications for management and practitioners.

The Journal of Organisational Creativity considers articles from a wide variety of interest areas and disciplines where the focus is on the production of creative outcomes that can produce added value in an organisational context. All accepted articles are subject to a double-blind peer review process and are published in a bi-annual issue online. The Journal of Organisational Creativity is free for both authors and readers.

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Journal of Organisational Creativity. Our focus is on bringing a blend of academic research and practitioner insights to a wide range of interested readers. We publish original articles relevant to the production of creative outcomes in organisations and encourage papers that include strong implications for management and practitioners which are presented in a section called *Ideas for practice* within each article.

The Journal of Organisational Creativity considers articles from a wide variety of interest areas and disciplines where the focus is on the production of creative outcomes that can produce added value in an organisational context.

In this issue we focus on producing creative outcomes in a team context. Our first paper by Rouxelle de Villiers & Alexandra Hess builds on the need for executive problem-solving skills by offering insights and tools in role-plays as creativity training designed for the organizational innovation environment. In our second paper, Philip Dennett introduces a model based on a Socratic Dialogue that can be used to produce group flow that results in creative outcomes in a real-life context. Finally, in our Exploration column, marketing practitioner Anna Ogilby discusses the current phenomenon of brand integration in television programming and presents a checklist for marketers considering the use of this tactic.

I would especially like to thank the members of our Editorial Board whose support has been instrumental in turning a concept into reality.

*Dr Philip Dennett (Editor)*
The magic cloak: Releasing the creative genie in your workplace
Rouxelle de Villiers & Alexandra Hess

Abstract
This paper builds on the need for executive problem-solving skills by offering insights and tools in role-plays as creativity training – designed for the organizational innovation environment. The unpredictable nature of role-playing makes it an appropriate tool for developing creative thinking – testing ideas and preparing people for unpredictable situations in simulated environments which subsequently links to real-world problem-solving issues. In this paper we discuss the implications and benefits of role-plays; including its aids, such as props and costumes, in organizational training programs and as a tool for enhancing creativity skills. Next, we develop a 5-Stage Group Creative Thinking Framework. Lastly, this paper provides clear guidelines to assist practitioners to develop their own scenarios for role-playing in cooperative simulations or collaborative creative teams. We provide a checklist for designing your own simulated settings, roles and finding suitable props to inspire and excite the role of actors and observers. By using role-plays, organizations utilise individual competencies, capabilities and skills, and enable group creative think-tanks aimed at expanding the range of possible solutions, increasing teamwork, enhancing the workplace experience and yielding proficiency in desired soft competencies.

Keywords: creative drama; ideation; problem-redefinition; role-play, simulated interaction; think-tanks

Introduction
"Because he (sic) is confident, he is also tolerant where there should be tolerance. A world of tolerant people would be a peaceful and co-operative people. Thus creativity is the key to education in its fullest sense and to the solution of mankind’s most serious problems" (Guilford, 1968, p. 147)

Less Fear, better creativity with group thinking in the workplace
Societies and businesses are faced with significant economic and environmental challenges – ranging from globalization and digitization, to the growth of augmented reality and the increasing roles of artificial intelligence (AI) – that require creative, alternative solutions. There is an urgent need to understand how to improve creativity to solve immediate and sticky problems in the workplace. In the past, businesses have relied on selective individuals’ creativity in the form of dedicated internal creatives, or external expert designers and consultants. Yet, in today’s fast-paced, hyper-competitive environment, innovation, based on creative thinking, is vital for high performing organizations. In “A world fast shifting from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age” (Pink, 2005) creative thinking skills contribute to sustainable competitive advantages (Kak & Shushil, 2002; Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2017). In addition, sophisticated, progressive, consumers demand personalized on the spot, or with some immediacy (Burroughs & Mick, 2004; Pitta, & Franzak, 1996). Organizations are urged to act fast and efficient, not just rely on single, talented, creative employees, or external agencies to provide fast solutions – instead utilizing the skills and knowledge of the whole work force by encouraging and teaching creative problem solving to the whole employee group. The question remaining is: What can companies do to improve creative outcomes and to create a
creative workforce?

While most creativity researchers acknowledge that, while there may be some degree of inherent creative ability, creative thinking techniques can significantly improve creative outcomes (Lemons, Kilgour & Koslow, 2009; Mumford & Simonton 1997; West & Shiu, 2014). This is not to say that creativity training is a simple process with immediate results or that it consistently results in highly creative, useful outputs. Instead, there is criticism of one of the most common creativity thinking techniques, such as divergent thinking, in that the improvements that occur in the laboratory (think-tanks) or training settings (workshops) do not translate well into the workplace (Runco, 1993; 2008).

Different interventions have also shown to have different results based upon the different characteristics (including personality and level of expertise of the topic) of the various participants (Amabile, 1990; Kilgour & Koslow, 2009; King, Walker, & Broyles, 1996; Runco, 2008). Creative ideational output and creative problem-solving procedures are not a one-size-fits-all toolbox. While some creative thinking tools might not have achieved the desired outcome, a possible solution is group creativity thinking (GCT). Since the 1950’s scholars and creative practitioners have offered methods to combine multiple individual skills by encourage group creativity – Osborn’s brainstorming (1963) and De Bono’s Thinking Hats (1995; 2011) are examples – but uptake has been slow (Zhou & Shalley, 2011). To become a real creative thinking asset to the workforce, employees must be given the thinking tools, role- models, and the corporate culture where innovation can thrive (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a). We propose role-play that can use individual skills to safely develop proficiency in various skills such as conflict resolution, negotiation, consulting and customer service (Hassi & Laakso, 2011). In addition, West, Hoff, and Carlsson (2016) suggest play, drama and simulations enhance workplace experiences and improve meetings. Given that workers spend more than six hours a week in scheduled meetings, senior managers more than 23 hours (55% of their time) planning or attending meetings, positive encouragement of inspired creative collaboration within teams will be useful (Elsayed-Elkhoully, Lazarus, & Forsythe, 1997; Rogelberg, Allen, Shanock, Scott, & Shuffler, 2010). With studies indicating that more than 67% of surveyed executives consider meetings unproductive (Rogelberg et al., 2010) – thinking tools within group scenarios are necessary, not just to the overall organizational outcomes but also to employee satisfaction.

If we frame meetings as problem-solving interventions, and creative think-tanks’ purpose as producing novel, appropriate, well-expressed solutions (Kilgour, 2007); problem-solving groups will benefit from adopting new ways of thinking in a process that opens up new channels of creativity. In line with this argument, the particular focus of this paper is to elucidate the effect of non-standardized (not pre-scripted) role-play, supported by props (costumes and artefacts), on team creative processes (TCP). In doing so, we offer a research-informed yet practical guide to create the playful, fun, motivational environment – via role-play – where new ideas can thrive and thinkers can excel, and subsequently create an organizational environment that is set up to master the digitalized fast moving corporate environment.

The next three sections are based on, and align evidence from: (a) established theoretical frameworks in creative thinking (i.e. we studied more than 50 creative thinking techniques); (b) a review of the literature on nurturing creative competencies, neuroscience and management literature; as well as (c) our empirical study, which is outlined as follows:

In our empirical study, we observed and explored the experiences of third-year business students in Italy, New Zealand and South Africa. 165 students participated in a one hour long learning intervention (plus half an hour for random group allocation, reading the scenario, and self-selection of props) that used role-playing to foster the acquisition of inter-personal and creative thinking skills by asking groups of five students to develop a restaurant’s unique offering, menu, décor and promotional items for a themed restaurant (Afterlife). No creative thinking training was offered before the intervention, and neither quantity nor quality of results (level of creativity, novelty, feasibility, practicability, alignment with clients' brief/problem statement) was discussed with participants before or after gathering their feedback. Participants were, in line with the studies by (Egan, 2005; Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2007) instructed to produce large quantities of novel ideas, as opposed to high quality ideas. They were also instructed to take on two roles and repeat the exercise. The same facilitator (across the three countries) led the pre-designed simulated interaction and observed students’ participation in the intervention. Based on the role play intervention, the students’ experience was recorded afterwards in the form of verbal feedback, in depth interviews and an online survey.

The rest of the paper is outlined as follows: We first outline 9
reasons for using role-play to facilitate collaborative creative thinking. Next we propose and offer a 5 stage procedure of role play. Before concluding the paper, we provide a practical guide on “how” we can conduct role plays to simulate interaction and role-play which aims at enhancing decision-making and creative problem-solving.

Benefits of role play

“The word drama comes from ancient Greek and means quite literally ‘things done”. (Harrison, 1913)

Role-play is not new, but fits well in the creativity toolbox for groups

Scholars and practitioners have developed a large number of techniques to improve individual creative outcomes, including: SCAMPER (Eberle, 1971; 1996); random picture/word/concept techniques (De Bono, 2017; Dingli, 2009); False Faces (Michalko, 2006, 201; Robins & Kegley, 2010); creative drama (De Villiers, 2013; Sugahara et al., 2016), to name just a few. However, there is little research in the organizational creativity and innovation arena on the effects of role play (also named simulations or drama enactments). This is somewhat surprising, given that role-playing has long been used as a means of encouraging a variety of learning outcomes (Green, 2005; Reid & Petocz, 2004; Walberg & Stariha, 1992) and has been used in formal assessment centres to measure group and inter-personal competencies in job interviews since T-group assessments (Lewin, 1964). An additional cause for pause, is the fact that considering and building upon alternative viewpoints is at the heart of many creativity tools. Thus role-plays highly support the divergent and convergent thinking about alternative positions, and therefore aligns very well with the sought-after outcomes of creative processes. Creative expression is a significant issue that must be understood when researching creative thinking processes, as the number of ideas a person expresses may be a very small subset of the number of ideas they generate. Without acknowledgement of expression issues, processes cannot be recognized (Kilgour, 2006). There might be a significant difference between ideas generated and ideas expressed, due to social and personal characteristics of the respondents.

Role plays could be used as a method to influence this process in any of the stages of the creative thinking process. This paper looks at the effect of role play in relation to the first two of the stages: problem definition/redefinition and idea generation. We provide evidence from our study and the theoretical frameworks in creative thinking, neuroscience and management literature to support the tenet that simulated interaction and role-play enhance decision-making and creative problem-solving, but this paper will focus more intensely on the “how”.

Role-Plays: 9 Reasons Why It’s a perfect fit and fun!

As part of our research we have identified three common themes that have to be met for a creative output (i.e. to pass the “creative solution” test). They are: (i) thinkers need to employ divergent and convergent thinking; (ii) various perspectives of various people involved in the issue (problem causers, problem solvers and stakeholders) need to be considered; and (iii) the solutions need to be novel, appropriate and well expressed. Given these three principles, we illustrate why role-play match these requirements extremely well. (Verbatim quotes from anonymous participating students and executive role-players appear in quotation marks.)

Here are two problem statements as examples to guide our discussion:

Statement A: Two many feral cats endanger our indigenous birds.

Statement B: Too few parking bays in the city centre.

1. Experiential learning and play

In a study of exceptional creatives Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p. 61) identified playfulness as an important aspect of the creative thinkers’ characteristics and toolbox – resulting in a fully engaged state of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014b). Bateson and Nettle (2014) and West and Shiu (2014) found a positive relationship between playfulness and creativity in organizational settings; and Zabelian and Robinson (2010) suggest that thinking of oneself as a child (even for very short periods) facilitates creative thinking processes. Thus, this study considers the playful and fun format of role-plays, as important characteristics for the thinking process. Although some of the study’s participants originally indicated a lack of interest and low levels of affinity for this expression method (8.7%), the majority of participants (both students and executives) “enjoyed the playfulness [of the task]” and the “ability to get out of [my] own skin” and take on the persona of a client, competitor or pre-allocated role/function. Even reluctant participants indicated “enjoyment”, “time flew” in a state of flow, “like when playing on my [Xbox] games”. One enthusiastic actor summarized the interaction with fellow creative thinkers, as “a little escape into someone else’s skin where I can think as they do, feel as they do and
then respond to the dilemma as they do. This is an entirely new experience and way of thinking to me. I am not a very touchy-feely person.”

2. Accommodate learner styles and childlike learning via observation and play

Experiential learning allows learners from very early experience levels (infants), to observe, participate, and experiment. Our study found that this “state of play” can be especially “inspiring and freeing”, when accompanied by props and costumes. Participants report that the “fun and games allows one to forget that it is serious work, and simply think and enjoy, without stressing over correct answers”... “I think that’s also what makes it so good. With the joy comes the creative juices”. From the disciplines of child psychology and pedagogy, scholars stress the importance of allowing learning by accommodating different learning styles (Kolb & Kolb, 2012; Duff, 1995; Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008); In addition, the role-play allows visual and experiential engagement that is important for optimal participation and effective learning (Barkley, 2009; Sugahara & Boland, 2010; Sugahara et al., 2016).

3. Considering alternative viewpoints and paradigms

Design thinking theory and training advocates for empathy with “personas” involved with the problem (Dym, Agogino, Eris, Frey, & Leifer, 2005; Owen, 2006; Wyland, 2008). Ideation procedures advance from the very departure point of defining “customers” for whom the problem is relevant and the solution is of importance (Pruitt & Adlin, 2010). According to Suchman, Markakis, Beckman and Frankel (1997) performing dramatic roles can engage students in empathetic reasoning, requiring them to place themselves in another’s psychological frame and imagine that person’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. “The very nature of role-play promotes the consideration of various perspectives of various people (stakeholders or roles incorporated into the play), and thus brings a very important ability to the team – namely to link various paradigms of various stakeholders (persona) to the problem. For example: How would a teacher think about Case A? Issues raised by actors may range from “teaching cats and training owners”; to “classrooms for birds”; “cat uniforms with bells”... and “a licence patch to indicate shortened claws”. Whereas the role of policeman might offer alternative solutions such as: “lock cats up at night time”, “have regulations about tagging cats”; “provide enclosures (like jails) for birds/cats to keep one in and the other out”; “put cats under house arrest at all times”. A second benefit enacted roles bring to the discussion, is the built-in links between distant domains that is required to overcome mental set fixation. Experts in one area are compelled to think of an entirely different discipline or domain, for example an accountant may be asked to take on the role of a teacher or policeman, thus removing some of the patterns of thinking of his/her particular area of expertise – creating an instant thinking bridge between his/her area of expertise and the problem or issue being discussed. One participant stated: “it’s fun to think like a marketer” and another “a mother [of a toddler] would be worried about the safety [of her child], more than what it costs”.

4. Promotes dissent and openness

The importance of a willingness to challenge the status quo, openness to new thoughts and an attitude of non-judgment among team members, has been well documented by researchers as a conducive climate for team creativity (Kohn, Paulus, & Choi, 2011; West et al., 2016). Role-play compels actors to “wear a mask...making it possible to say what you really mean under the guise of the role being enacted”; thus providing the freedom to express one’s own opinion and “hidden agendas”. The enacted drama, by being hypothetical and “not quite real”, allows for less “PC-ness, political correctness” and the freedom to express “not so popular viewpoints”. Dissent is promoted, as one observer commented: “being the devil’s advocate is now expected and not frowned upon”. Another participant concluded that “role-play allows us to express some gut responses without having to apologize for not having facts or evidence [Props and costumes] give persona more meaning and really allows one to ‘be and feel the actor”.

5. Allows permissible weaknesses in the Belbin team roles

Due to limited resources (time, money, capabilities and competencies) creative teams are often established with some urgency for creative output (e.g., client briefs; imminent deadlines). Thus teams do not always have the luxury of time to develop trust and progress through the various Belbin team roles (1981; 1993), ahead of creative think-tanks or project initiation. Assigning roles within the team (either by self-determined role specification or by pre-assigned roles for different actors), the time taken to go through the “forming” and “norming” stages of the team work, can be reduced, even removed. In Belbin’s team roles, inter-personal harmony and team productiveness, correlates highly with a balance between task-and-relationship foci of the various team members. Using the role-play stages discussed in
Figure 1, teams can immediately get into the third, relevant “performing stage” of team cohesion and productiveness, since forming and norming is part of the set-up procedure, and is fast-tracked through the role-allocation and role-specification (and supported by the props). In addition, wearing masks and other props, allow team members to take on persona that demand no need to “fit in” or take on a team role, other than on the one assigned in the role-play.

6. Reduces bias and systematic thinking errors

Decisions are often influenced by “systematic errors of judgement” (Krogerus & Tschäppeler, 2017, p.76) that thinkers make unconsciously. Krogerus and Tschäppeler (2017) stress four thinking errors humans consistently make: (i) the “anchor effect”, i.e. trusting the first information we get; (ii) we assume we can be objective with facts we consider, but thinkers often block out information that contradicts their own opinions; (iii) we base our arguments and decisions on available (above all autobiographical) information and trust anecdotal evidence; and (iv) we believe intuitively that we have made the right decisions. For all four of these thinking mistakes, role-play can act as treatment or solution. Having multiple team members playing multiple roles and playing multiple iterations of the same scenario, will almost certainly, address these cognitive biases. It is almost impossible to eliminate these biases totally from everyday thinking, but with the sharpened awareness (as produced in iterative unscripted role-plays), the four biases can be reduced and improve teams’ effective thinking (De Villiers, 2013).

7. Combines the good stuff from various tools

Like the 6 thinking hats’ structured roles, the visual inspiration offered by the random picture technique, and the empathy and stakeholder perspectives from design thinking tools.

The multiple thinking hats applied through De Bono’s Six Hats methods (1999), can be easily built into the designed scenario, by selecting persona to take on the important contributions of the various “hats”. For example, the red hat that allows for emotional response, but a role like “difficult teenager” (conflict handling) or “mother of a toddler” (focus on health and safety) is likely to cover many emotional responses in the role-play (depending on the interpretation of the actor). Similarly, De Bono’s blue hat thinking might direct actors to be directive, assertive and well-structured, can be achieved by asking role-players to enact the thinking style of the policeman, the air traffic controller or school headmaster. It’s like random word or random picture techniques... but with roles/functions/people or personalities. Similarly, “random word” and “random picture” techniques (known divergent thinking tools) are almost automatically included by using a selection of people (actors can interpret the role as they see fit) and the props that act as visual reminders and prompts (for actors and observers). Having multiple roles, include benefits from the various techniques into one effort/intervention, without “training” participants in those methodologies.

8. Role-play is a form of enacted story-telling

Where actors interpret the issue, problem, or scenario from their own past experiences and perspective (De Villiers & Botes; 2014) In pedagogy, cognitive psychology, marketing and organizational behaviour studies, story-telling is heralded for its strengths as a learning and persuasion tool (Alterio & McDrury, 2003; Barrett, 2006; De Villiers et al., 2017; Gottschall, 2012; Taylor, Fisher, & Dufresne, 2002; Woodside, Sood, & Miller 2008). The very act of participation in the enactment, allows actors to immerse in the “story” and bring meaning. Since ideas are not criticized during play, this form of enacted brainstorming allows for convergent/divergent thinking, as the ideas arise. Evaluation of ideas is considered during a later stage (that’s why the debriefing session is so valuable), thus naturally enforcing the “delayed evaluation ‘rule’” of effective brainstorming (Osborn, 1963).

9. Scaffolding- props, costumes, masks

Developmental psychologist Vygotsky (1962) emphasized the gradual or proximal learning of humans, as well as instrumental utility, that came from other humans, including parents and teachers (Vygotsky, 1962). Various other cognitive researchers expanded the idea, and labelled the supportive structures and tools “scaffolding”. Virtual (mental scaffolding such as mentorship) and physical structures such as props (set pieces in a physical space), pencils, pens, whiteboards, cue cards, memory aids, bulletin boards, computer tools, experts as information sources and information structures can act as scaffolding (Clark, 1997, 2001; Kirsh, 1995; Hutchins, 1995). In addition, costumes and other props assist in allowing role-players to “escape into the persona’s world” and “get out of your own skin” to gain confidence and willingly add alternative perspectives to the scenario as enacted in the role-play.

Stages in creative group thinking

Creativity requires more than just the ability to generate and
evaluate creative ideas internally, instead multiple distinct stages are part of the creative thinking process. Csikszentmihaly & Sawyer (1995) suggested a creative thinking 4-phase model, which has acted as an anchor point and serves as a good guideline for phased creative processes. In their model (Csikszentmihaly & Sawyer, 1995, p.332) the first phase is preparation, followed by incubation, then insight, and finally elaboration and evaluation. We adapt and extend this general model for creativity to a specific 5-stage creative thinking (GCT) model: (1) Problem Identification, (2) Problem Refinement & Statement, (3) Incubation & Ideation, (4) Evaluation of Appropriateness, (5) Expressing Ideas. Where other methods fail to address all the 5 steps of the process, role plays could be used as a method to influence this process in any of the stages of the creative thinking process (i.e. gaming, educational drama and simulated interaction). In the particular case of role play, figure 1 highlights the purpose of each stage in the procedure.

Problem Definition & Problem Statement

“Creative problem-solving, the production of solutions to complex, novel, and ill-defined problems” (Vessey & Mumford, 2012, p. 41.)

The extent to which we look for solutions from divergent cross memory categories, or merely search for solutions from within the current domain will depend on how broadly we have set our anchor points and hence parameters (Kilgour, 2006). The broader the anchor points, the more likely we are to look at more unusual memory categories to find a solution and therefore generate a more original response. If we define a problem narrowly then we limit our ability to think across categories in order to generate new ideas. The way in which a problem has been defined influences the type of problem operators (Lovett & Anderson, 1996) that are selected to apply to answering it. Indeed, Ward, Patterson and Sifonis (2004) found that more abstract approaches to

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**Figure 1: Five-stage Group Creative Thinking (GCT) Phases – using Role Play**

*Diagram showing the five stages of the GCT model with corresponding facilitator's role.*

**Facilitator’s Role:**

- **Design the initial Problem Statement AND/OR roles.**
- **Determine the group size or number of role-players in the enacted scenario.**
- **Lead the discussion about stakeholders and co-create roles/persona. OR Brief actors using Y&R archetypes or predetermined persona/roles. Draw up role descriptions. Provide role actors with role-cards, or persona descriptors.**
- **Find a range of relevant props for the allocated roles and distribute the props. Set up the stage/set pieces. OR make a wide range of props and set pieces available. Actors self select props/costumes. Allow time for the role-actors to familiarise themselves with the scenario and their roles.**
- **Lead the debriefing and reset the scene for a second and even third enactment.**
- **Lead the discussion if the same actors/roles are used or if actors/roles are reallotted. Debrief role-actors regarding novelty, new domains to consider, available time, or experiences for each round.**
- **Manage the idea expression phase. Allow all actors to get several chances to speak. Record the generated ideas. Facilitate process to appoint project teams and set up the next stage of implementation. Ensure good expression of novel ideas and persuasive presentation to clients.**
problem definition lead to more original solutions. Problem redefinition techniques are important as new ideas and situational variables that could be used as the basis for creative combinations may not get past the strict parameters set by the anchor points in our problem definition. The initial thoughts set the anchor points from which ideas can be connected, and hence the more diverse the problem definition the more creative the solution.

There is a significant body of literature to suggest that role-play, simulations, games and educational drama will influence problem definition processes due to its effect on: i) anchor points, and ii) social constraints (Kilgour, 2007; West, & Shui, 2014). Further, how a person constructs a problem has been shown to have an influence on the quality of the solution (Reiter-Palmon, Mumford, Boes, & Runco, 1997). Building on many decades of creativity research in various disciplines (Grawitch, Munz, Elliott, & Mathis, 2003; Mumford & Gustafson, 2007; West, & Shui, 2014), our study confirms and expands on the importance of clear problem definition (Note: for this study, it does not imply narrow, restrictive definitions, but rather enables common understanding of the problem within the team.) Since problem definition from a cognitive processing perspective, is the process of determining the starting points (also called anchor) for idea generation, it sets parameters for the internal search parameters for the actors (Guilford, 1968).

Research by Lovett and Anderson (1996) indicates that people use a combination of past experience and problem-specific information when deciding on the method they use to solve a building stick task. Mumford and Simonton (1997), find that in addition to the memories cued by the situational information, people will also apply decisions rules and procedures to assist in defining a problem. Anchoring the role-play in a non-restrictive problem-statement, refines the entire premise, thus impacting the likely solutions to the problem.

While role-plays may result in more unusual problem definitions, they may limit creativity in other ways. It would be expected that role-plays and props would make some people more self-conscious, thus limiting their creative expression, whilst others may be inspired and enthused to play-act their roles. Research indicates that creative individuals exhibit high levels of self-confidence and a lack of need for social acceptance (Barron & Harrington, 1981: Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993), making costumes masks and props likely to have less impact on them, than more inhibited participants.

Ideation (The impact of role-play on novelty and diversity of ideas)

“It is […] seen that firms can benefit from more deliberate approaches to ideation.” (Björk, Boccardelli, & Magnusson, 2010)

Creative thinking requires the cognitive ability to retrieve and combine knowledge from various domains in disparate memories (Smith, 1995). Analogical (using analogies from multiple domains) and metaphorical thinking helps thinkers to comprehend complex or unfamiliar ideas through familiar ones (e.g., using the human body to represent organizational structure) (Mehta & Dahl, 2019, p. 32). Further, the movement of embodied cognition, reports that sensorimotor experiences influence human cognition – even by simply walking, arm flexion and extension an active creativity (Friedman & Förster, 2000; 2002). Mehta and Dahl report (2019, p.39) that “contextual cues present within our environment can affect cognitive processes and drive creativity”. Authors Vohs, Redden and Rahinel (2013) as well as Mehta and Dahl, (2019) stress the links between incidental cues from the environment, even disorderly (messy) environments can improve creativity by reducing functional fixedness. According to our own study, role-plays aided by props and theatrical set pieces, aid greatly in achieving the messiness, sensorimotor experiences and memory retrieval required to enable improved group creative idea generation (GCIG).

Props, costumes and stage sets

There is surprisingly little written about the impact of props (artefacts, masks, cloaks, costumes, photos, drawings, and other physical items, such as stethoscopes, whistles, sashes, and theatrical set pieces like buckets, ladders and furniture) on creative thinking in organizational settings. Most studies appear in the creative gaming and entertainment literature, with a bare few in pedagogy, child psychology and cognitive sciences (Cohen, 2011; Dawson, 2018; Kirk & French, 2008; Dawson & Lee, 2018). “Recent research on embodiment in sociology, philosophy and cognitive sciences suggests conceptual linkages between embodied ways of knowing, lived experiences and creativity” (Dawson, 2018, p.67). Cohen (2011) reports that the use of costumes helps children to assume new roles and alternative views, while Falk & Davenport (2004) stress two contributions of props, costumes and artefacts. First, “players believe in and agree with what happens around them” (2004; p. 136), and second “contribute
to supporting the performance of belief, helping the player express and display themselves [lucidly and convincingly]" and “affect players commitment and engagement” (p.130). Visual clues and using space improve memory capacity (Kristensen, 2006; Bran, 1991). “A simple way of materializing is sketching and using diagrammatic methods, visual models and tangible objects” (Kristensen, 2006, p. 18). Organizational sociologists West, Hoff and Carlsson (2016) report on practitioners “using props or cues to encourage play,” (p. 71) … “a sense of openness” (p. 79), … “intrinsic motivation” (p. 80) … “all important for group creativity” (p. 80). Educators tasked with developing students’ creative competencies concludes that “whenever possible an idea or concept should be materialized (Kristensen, 2006, p.18). This is in accordance with the embodied cognitive theory (Clark, 1997).”

After this study, one participant commented during the post-drama interview: “[wearing a mask] was empowering! I could see people focussing on what I was saying and although the mask kind of hid my face, it allowed me to be heard … and be seen. The whole cast listened every time I spoke. If felt good to be heard. I could feel myself getting stronger each time I spoke”.

**Appropriateness & Expression**

One limit in terms of the positive effect of role play is that of idea expression. Even if role play results in new anchor points for problem redefinition, various novel ideas are conceived, and role-players fully engage in generating novel solutions, does not mean that all individuals will express their ideas or that some individuals express all their ideas. The reasons may vary from extrinsic motivation (evaluation, money) as deterrent (Amabile et al. 1979), competition (Amabile 1992), to personal status and power (Sligte, De Dreu and Nijstad, 2011), pre-judging own ideas (too wacky, too shallow, irrelevant, etc.), social identity (Gaither, 2018), to perceptions about having ideas outside of the scope of their allocated roles (in the drama) (De Villiers, 2013; Mehta & Dahl, 2019). It is thus important to verbally, through the oral and written brief and during the debriefing state and restate the importance of no prior judgement of ideas and assessment (either of the idea or the person). One way to reiterate this mind-set is to cite the work of Hayes (1978) and Bloom (1963), that there has been no correlation found between intelligence and creativity.

“By hearing what I said, I have more of an idea what I mean (little laugh) and also how to add a few statements to improve the overall message”

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### Ideas for practice

**Considerations When Designing Effective Role-Plays For Team Think-Tanks (GCT)**

**Carefully choose a problem (business issue) and provide the context**

Select an issue, problem, case or situation (termed scenario) to enact. If the scenario is drawn from the participating team, ask the participants who raised the scenario, to set the scene and discuss the stakeholders. Explain enough background to make the situation clear, so roles will not be played solely from stereotypes. The context is important to address the issue of appropriateness of possible solutions, and to help to consider solutions during ideation, by considering various stakeholders from different perspectives. Use your storytelling techniques to sketch the context within which the problem exists. For Case A, for example, the facilitator of the think-tank could tell a story about the ducks in the central city park being caught by street cats that escaped from flats or were left behind by careless travellers. Elaborating with some (hypothetical or real) facts about the growth in number of feral cats year-on-year.

**Ensure authenticity, buy-in, and motivation**

To engage the participants, ensure that the problem or scenario sounds reasonable, authentic and worth solving/addressing. Have a short rehearsal before engaging in the actual problem-solving role-play in order to iron out biases, resistance and inertia. The more often same teams role-play the less time goes into this phase, since they become used to enactment and taking on “new persona”. New groups need to be allowed time to move from “this is silly”, to “this is a creative tool”.

**Consider the number of roles and the number of personas in the problem**

Carefully consider the primary players affected by the scenario (not role-players by stakeholders). Think of the number of people in the role-play team, and if the problem is likely to benefit from having more than one participant enacting a par-
tic role/function/thinking style. For example, if you are considering the design for a playscape for kids, you might need more role-players enacting children’s or parents’ roles, than for a think-tank considering solutions for Case B. For Case A, you might have a role for two “authority” figures (e.g., a park ranger and a policeperson). For small teams who regularly work together on multiple projects, an alternative approach is to have a set of pre-designed roles (using cards depicting the roles, e.g. a lawyer, teacher, policeman, librarian, architect, mother, student, etc.) that gets randomly allocated to participants for each project (convincing, communicating, creative story). Also think carefully about assigning roles for smaller teams. In large teams the diversity is likely to deal with personal biases or inexperience. In smaller teams, the facilitator may need to assign roles to reduce the impact of lack of insight into assigned roles. E.g., in Case B, someone who has never driven a car, may not think broadly enough of the implication of the scenario on driver competencies. In contrast, cast participants in roles with which they do not identify strongly. The facilitator should assign (or ask the role-player to name the character, to assist all participants in taking on the new persona).

Use pictures and props to establish the role/function of each role-player in the team and allow for a few minutes of individual reflection and projection so that role-players can dress up both mentally and physically (much like actors do). Allow a few minutes for people to get into their roles and to plan their strategy. Ask participants to think about other aspects of the character they are enacting that is relevant to the scenario or incident (e.g. are they married, do they have kids, where do they live, how many pets do they have, how often do they go on holiday). This anticipation of the role makes for more realistic responses and directs some dramatized reactions during the role-play. Our study found that visuals (photos or clipart) depicting the persona, help participants to truly “slip into the role” and “think as the character thinks” to see the problem from the perspective of the role they are assigned to play. E.g., for Case A someone role-playing the bird can be given a handful of feathers pinned to a sash or hairband. For Case B, dressing like a traffic warden, carrying a whistle and a cap helped to remind our study’s participants of the function as “guardians “as well as law keepers”. Props need not be expensive or authentic, but role-players need to be given time to think what these props represents to themselves within this role/function.

To keep roles really broad and to aid divergent thinking, design roles around archetypes or persona (consumers or stakeholders) often used in brand marketing (Cameron, 2015; Redhil, 1999), rather than functional roles in organizations. These are very useful when considering future issues, where the stakeholders might not be fully identified yet.

Debrief observers and role-players, then “play it again” using either old or new roles/archetypes. Facilitators need to ask pointed, probing questions about the novelty of the ideas, as well as prompt actors to keep trying for both higher quantity and quality (utility and novelty combined) solutions during the debriefing sessions. One way to move the conversations to new domains is to ask participants to cluster the generated ideas and highlight areas of low quantity (not quality!), in order to search for ideas in associative memories (SAM, Raaijmakers & Shiffrin, 1981) and deep search of associated semantic categories (Rietschel et al. 2007). Allow actors to contemplate the generated ideas, their own role and the problem statement in silence for a few minutes (2-3 minutes), before resuming play.

An important additional point of consideration for practitioners is the allocation of time. To the best of our knowledge, there is no study specifying the ideal or most effective duration. From this study and the author/facilitator’s prior experiences, three important considerations impact the time allowance: (i) enough time should be allowed for role-players to read the scenario and familiarize themselves with “the problem” and their determined role; (ii) time should be given to select props and don the costumes – some participants have to “get comfortable with the thought, see
the more extroverted actors “go for it”, and slowly add more costumes and other props to their own persona; and (iii) a crucial stage in the role-play is the debriefing. Facilitators should allow ample time for this final, important third activity, as it is very time consuming. Debriefing demands patience, the ability to probe, and allow lulls in the conversation. If at all possible, time should also be allowed for the same actors to role-play the same scenario a second (even a third) time. Facilitators may decide to allocate new roles (at random) to the same players, or role-players to play the same persona, but review their interpretation of the role and be encouraged to enact alternative decisions and behaviour. This second iteration (refer to figure Y) allows for other insights, much like hearing others’ ideas contributes to effective brainstorming (Putman & Paulus, 2009).

Conclusion

Based on learning and motivation principles, prop-aided role-plays have multiple benefits: (i) diversity of thinking, ensures high levels of novelty; (ii) conscious and in a structured consideration of the perspectives of stakeholders ensures appropriate solutions; (iii) initially does not allow criticism thus allows novel suggested solutions, but as a final stage, ensures alignment with the purpose, brief and goals of the think-tank; and (iv) ensures a closed feedback loop which includes input into the expression stage, allowing for better client proposals and reports. Using a variety of well-tested evidence- and consumer-based creative thinking tools does not only result in synergy - allowing for optimal use of limited human resources – but also in a happy, productive workspace. Since creative team role-plays allow for self-confidence, self-efficacy and open communication between actors and observers, the five-stage GCT techniques using role-plays improve peaceful collaboration and the quality of the creative outcomes.

Aside from the innovation benefits of creativity, a playful work environment may also prove valuable to organizations wishing to attract young talent, for whom having fun and enjoying their work seems to be more important than it has been for previous generations (West, Hoff, & Carlson, 2016). Employees embrace creative workplaces, and the right conditions for innovation make for a happier workforce (Time Life Mindpower, 1996; p. 101). Coleman, Kaufman and Ray (1993) states that workers look for a job that “offers a sense of meaning and a platform for individual creativity”.

As opportunities to collaborate with customers, suppliers and internal teams increase (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), it is beneficial to improve our understanding of the social aspects of creativity (Mason, 1988; Mehta & Dahl, 2019). The social and organizational consequences of releasing creative abilities within groups and team collaborative thinking, are potentially enormous.

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Csikszentmihalyi meets Socrates: Fostering a sense of group flow to produce creative outcomes

Philip Dennett

Abstract

Collective consciousness (and ultimately creativity) can evolve from a sense that contributions are group ones rather than personal ones. A facilitator can enhance this by fostering a sense of “flow” which Csikszentmihalyi says adds up to an outcome greater than the sum of the inputs. This idea of flow also explains how a fully engaged team can perform at high levels regardless of the individual creativity of team members.

This paper introduces a model based on a Socratic Dialogue that can be used to produce group flow resulting in creative outcomes in a real-life context.

Keywords: creativity; innovation; ideation; socratic dialogue; teamwork.

Note: The research described in this paper was undertaken as part of the author’s PhD dissertation.

Creativity in an organisational context arises from the interplay between an individual, the team in which they operate and the organisational context they work in (Gianluca et al., 2017) and is a key success factor for organisational success (Anderson, De Dreu & Nijstad, 2004; Sohn & Jung, 2010; Beheshtifar & Kamani-Fard, 2013). The antecedents of creativity have been well documented, but it is the interplay between them, such that a deficiency in one area can be offset by a strength in another, that requires examination.

Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin (1993) say that this dynamic can be managed to produce a creative outcome by using the Socratic Method (a directed questioning technique to encourage critical thinking). This paper is an exploration of this contention.

Theoretical grounding

While there are conflicting views about the use of a Socratic approach to manage creativity (Schiender, 2013), from an organisational context it is generally agreed that Nelson was the first to apply it. Nelson (1949) says that the method doesn’t produce new knowledge, but rather uses reflection to make explicit the tacit. He describes the method as one of regressive abstraction – moving backward from a statement and removing assumptions – to be left with the essence. In the examination of assumptions the process will also illustrate shortcomings in thinking (Morrell, 2004) that can create dissonance, which if handled correctly, can result in people examining their beliefs more closely (Grill, Ahlborg, Wikstrom & Lindgren, 2015), and is at the core of a Socratic Dialogue.

Introducing an element of structure into a dialogue brings a greater focus on the problem being discussed, producing fewer but more creative solutions than a free-flowing structure such as brainstorming (Sagiv, Arieli, Goldenberg & Goldschmidt, 2010). In a Socratic Dialogue the structure comes from the questioning process which should be one
of guided discovery that involves moving from the concrete (what is known), to the abstract (synthesis of that knowledge) (Padesky, 1993) thus inspiring new insights that produce a creative outcome (Neenan, 2009).

A Socratic dialogue should be divided into three distinct parts (Chesters, 2012; Kessels, 2001). The first concerns the question itself – in its final form it should be simple and specific to experiences rather than hypothetical, and should also be capable of being solved by rational argument (Bolten, 2001). The second part is a dialogue addressing the question, the aim of which is to reach an explicit (actionable) consensus (Overholser, 1991). The final part is an evaluation that results in specific principles that apply to the question (Vlastos, 1982), which has the effect of increasing the knowledge capital of the organisation or group. At the core of the method is the Socratic elenchus or refutation, which is a series of questions from Socrates designed to expose inconsistencies or ambiguities in belief (Vlastos, 1982). Ambiguity in a premise set in a Socratic elenchus must be removed before any refutation can be accepted as true (Dougherty, 2007).

The proposed Socratic Dialogue Model (Figure 1) synthesizes the approach of Socrates himself with the constructs of 21st century authors for application in a business context. It proposes that the initial question (what do we currently believe about the issue?), establishes a hypothesis or belief that requires testing and is followed by a series of questions gathering evidence (what evidence supports our belief?); questions to uncover conflicting views (what conflicting views are there?); and finally, a series of questions to explore the implications and consequences of the discussion (where does this dialogue lead us?).

The objective of the dialogue is not to make final decisions (Bohm, 1996) but to engage participants in a creative process that “inspires further curiosity and open-minded reflection” (Skordoulis & Dawson, 2007, p. 993). According to Schmid (1983) the rationale for the Socratic method is to expose both the lack of knowledge about the dialogic issue and any delusions about existing knowledge.

The final result stage examines the implications and consequences (Paul & Elder, 2006) of the preceding dialogue and produces a creative outcome. While Chesteres (2012) suggests that a conclusion is required, this shouldn’t be seen as an ending of the exploration of the issue, rather as a summation of the current situation and hopefully a starting point for further exploration (Bohm, 1996; Skordoulis & Dawson, 2007).

The contribution of this research is to empirically test and validate the theoretical model; document its final iteration; and produce a template for its use by management. A grounded theory methodology is used because of the exploratory nature of this task and a desire to produce a management tool grounded in reality.

Procedures

A grounded theory methodology supports the development of a theory (the proposed Socratic Model) through the use of constant comparison and ongoing questioning and is appropriate when looking for new insights into existing problems (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

A key advantage of the methodology is that early analysis of qualitative data stimulates new questions and leads the researcher on new paths (Charmaz, 2006); and is therefore appropriate in this case as the use of a Socratic approach to managing creativity in organisations has not been comprehensively explored. This means that the development of a new theory grounded in data will provide a base for further examination. A constructivist approach was also taken because it allows the researcher to be an active participant (Conlon et al., 2013), which in this case was as a facilitator.

Based on Beck’s (1993) suggestions, scientific rigour in this study is established in three ways: Firstly, credibility comes through agreement from participants that results reflect their experience and accurately describe the outcomes from the session. Secondly, fittingness is achieved by checking that findings are consistent across all the groups under study. And thirdly, auditability comes via the production of detailed field notes immediately following each session.

Data gathering methods used were:
Workshops conducted in a real-world setting, which examine a question of interest to the subject organisation using the proposed Socratic model.

Questionnaires given to each participant exploring their perceptions of creativity as it relates to themselves and their organisation.

Observations during each workshop.

Seminar to gather feedback from managers on the final model developed over the course of the study.

The use of workshops allowed the model to be tested using a real dialogue. The original conception of the model itself arose out of the literature review but in order to develop theory from its use, it had to be applied to a real situation. It also allowed the researcher (as facilitator) to be both an observer of the social interplay and a participant in the process in order to identify issues with both the structure and application of the model.

The use of individual questionnaires was designed to produce a baseline for the level of individual perceptions of creativity and the perceived tolerance of it by both the supervisor and the organisation itself. This was used to gain insight into how creativity is viewed in each organisation and how that might influence the results that were obtained. The data would also be valuable during implementation of the Socratic model in an organisation over time to measure the effect it had on people’s perceptions and to highlight any operational issues.

Questions were based on Amabile et al's (1996) perceptual model of creativity that used five categories of question: encouragement, autonomy, resources, pressures, and organisational impediments. The questionnaire was designed in two parts, the first to establish a baseline as described above and the second, administered after the workshop was designed to capture individual perceptions of the process itself.

The third method, observation, came from notes made by the facilitator during each workshop combined with the qualitative responses from part B of the questionnaire. These two sources created the data from which the grounded theory was developed.

The fourth method was a seminar with managers from different organisations to present the model developed from the theory to establish whether they felt it had the potential for real-world application.

Participants
Seven self-selected organisations participated. They operated in a range of different industries in order to minimise the likelihood of any contextual bias. Industries represented were: market research, engineering, education, local government, medicine, psychology, and an industry association. The number of participants in each organisation ranged between 3 and 5 with a total number of 29 individuals.

Multiple organisations were used to ensure that results were transferable, which is preferable when dealing with a broad-based phenomenon (Yin, 1981). It is also appropriate in building a grounded theory that will be extended as the study proceeds (Benbasat, Goldstein & Mead, 1987). The eventual number of organisations participating was determined by the saturation point that comes when no new themes emerge (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Theory Development
After each stage of the data gathering process, in line with Spiggle's (1994) recommendation, ongoing revisions were made based on previous analysis so that the emerging theory was tested in future data gathering. Based on the data gathered from the first organisation, the finding was that the process itself was effective but that to achieve legitimacy in a real-life context there should be some form of initial measurement made to be able to quantify the value of the process over time.

To allow for this, an additional data gathering tool (individual questionnaires) was developed for use in the following workshops, to provide a benchmark of each team’s self-reported creativity. Following the workshops, participants were asked to record observations about the process itself and any changes in their own personal sense of creativity.

Having gathered all the raw data, open coding was used to interpret the comments made by participants. Based on this coding, ten first order concepts emerged, which were distilled into second order themes producing three aggregate dimensions, as recommended by Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012).

At the end of each workshop conducted during the data gathering phase, memos were created to record the findings and insights gained as a result of them.

During the course of the research the model was empirically grounded against the concepts that were developed, based on the findings. This process resulted in four additional ele-
ments being incorporated into the model. These were:

A preamble to the first stage – conducting a discussion and formally getting the agreement of the group on the question itself. This is supported by both the literature and the findings of this research.

Progression of questions – from concrete to abstract to creative. This was incorporated as a second dimension in the final model.

Cognition – proceed on a hierarchical basis from knowledge-based questions to evaluative questions to aid cognition during the process.

Flow – foster a collective consciousness by developing a sense of flow.

Following this process, the final model was validated via a workshop consisting involving three managers who hadn’t been part of the original research. The workshop presented a facilitator’s guide, the aim of which was to provide a step-by-step outline of the process as a guide for conducting a session using the 4E’s Socratic Model. Following the workshop there was agreement that the guide made it easy for anyone taking on the role of a facilitator to prepare and conduct a session with little or no prior experience.

The final iteration of the Model is shown in Figure 3 below.

Discussion

This study produced the grounded theory of the 4E’s Socratic Model as a means of encouraging creativity in an organisational context. The use of a Model is a legitimate approach to theory building in a qualitative context and serves as an aid to interpretation and the building of new knowledge (Briggs, 2007) and therefore is particularly relevant in this study.

Creativity is dependent on the relationship between the creator(s) and their position in the social system in which it takes place (Bourdieu, 1966). Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer (1995) agree, saying that organisational creativity is a function of group rather than individual creative processes. At the core of this is social interaction that starts with an open and honest exchange of views.

A number of authors suggest that a sense of creative self-efficacy is a catalyst for creative behaviour (Diliello & Houghton, 2006; Lim & Choi, 2009) and that it can be enhanced by a positive environment (Chong & Ma, 2010; Lim & Choi, 2009). In the questionnaire, scores for questions relating to self-efficacy ranged from 0.7 – 0.87 across all participants, which in itself suggested that there may be differences in outcomes as a result.

However, by establishing group ownership of the process by opening with a discussion of the question under consideration, deficits in efficacy and support were overcome, resulting in a sense of group flow. The resulting collective consciousness helped to overcome the effects of any deficits in creative self-efficacy, which suggested that a positive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Order Concepts</th>
<th>2nd Order Themes</th>
<th>Aggregate Dimensions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open and honest exchange of views</td>
<td>Eliminate politics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offset negative dynamics</td>
<td>Change in social dynamic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraged people to speak up</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of encouragement</td>
<td>External catalyst</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple approvals required</td>
<td>Hierarchical structure</td>
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<td>No senior management buy-in</td>
<td>Process champion</td>
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<td>No commitment to change</td>
<td>Creative culture</td>
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<td>Specific goals</td>
<td>Topic agreement</td>
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<td>Focused discussion</td>
<td>Acting in concert</td>
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<td>Project planning</td>
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Figure 2: Data structure based on Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012).
environment itself is a catalyst for creative behaviour (Bissola et al., 2014), irrespective of individual creativity.

Apart from a debate on the question itself, this sense of collective consciousness or flow came from two different aspects of the 4E’s Socratic methodology: firstly, by drawing out existing knowledge systematically through directing concrete questions about knowledge and comprehension to each participant; and secondly, by mandating that during this process the views expressed went unchallenged. This resulted in all participants identifying as group members rather than as individuals and removed the politics that is often a characteristic of group interactions.

The first exploration stage of the model overcomes this deficit by producing a system for a facilitator to follow and is consistent with Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer’s (1995) and McIntyre’s (2013) views that success is system- rather than idea-driven and should describe the actors, their interaction and any forces acting on them.

Another element that is important in a systematic approach is the questioning process itself. Many popular creative thinking techniques focus on producing new ideas (for example Alex Osborn’s (1953) Brainstorming concept). The problem with these is often the issue of group-think (Gobble, 2014), which can inhibit divergent thoughts and discourage people from disagreeing with the group.

The 4E’s Socratic Model overcomes this by using an hourglass approach to questioning (Figure 4). This combines both convergent and divergent thinking, starting broadly to expose all existing knowledge and then converging to a state of consensus before diverging again to produce a creative outcome. The positive effect associated with this approach bears out Goldschmidt’s (2016) assertion that both forms of thinking are necessary in creativity and that the ability to switch between them when required is a hallmark of creativity. It also maintains flow by systematically examining the issue and avoiding the lack of focus that is common in creative brainstorming.

In maintaining a state of group flow, members acted as a single entity, thus providing an important linkage between each step of the process. This enabled smooth transitions between the steps and helped transform the Socratic process into a system for producing creative outcomes.

The experience with each organisation studied proved the value of using a Socratic dialogue as a team management tool but also showed that a rigid hierarchical organisation is a barrier to creativity. This is consistent with the findings of Choi et al. (2009) and Hon et al. (2011), both of whom suggested that a supportive management mediates negative environmental influences.

The role of a leader (of an organisation or a group within that organisation) is to create an environment where uncertainty and risk are tolerated and personal consequences in a creative environment are positive. Andriopoulos (2001, p. 834) identifies the relevant contextual influences relating to this as a combination of organisational climate and culture, leadership style, resources and skills, structure and systems.
However, it is the leader who controls all of those influences and therefore needs to be actively involved in creative processes.

In a practical sense, the support of senior management can be shown by including management representatives in the process to demonstrate it. In a briefing prior to one of the sessions, a conflict between the management team and the Board (in a not-for-profit organisation) in terms of expectations being unrealistic was highlighted. The session, which included the Board Chairman, provided a structure whereby everyone felt comfortable that they would be accountable for the outcomes agreed. This came from having present, in the same session, all the people who had opinions about and were affected by the topic under discussion. The neutrality provided by the Socratic process removed personalities from the debate and enabled both sides of the conflict to see the other side’s point of view.

As predicted in the literature, tolerance got in the way of groups acting in concert. It manifested itself when some participants became frustrated with the dialogue when their views were challenged and illustrated the value of having a strong facilitator. A facilitator needs to ensure everyone is committed to, and therefore accountable for, the relevant team processes by agreeing to both the question being addressed and the outcome expectation. This commitment helped overcome issues of personality and was consistent with the findings of O’Neill and Allen (2011) relating to team level personality.

Conclusions

A number of authors (Paul & Elder, 1998; Bolten, 2001; Kessels, 2001; Chesters, 2012) present steps in a process to extend Socrates’ philosophical model when it is applied to a business context. However, for the average executive, there is little in the way of explanation as to how they should negotiate each step in the process (Kessels, 2001).

Bolten (2001) gives some advice, suggesting that dialogic success comes from having a skilled facilitator, while Kessels (2001, p53) lists some of the techniques such a person should use. At the heart of the Socratic method is the elenchus that Chesters (2012) describes as a “process of questioning” (p77) but doesn’t elaborate upon. A process, by definition, needs to be structured and contain a number of steps and it is not enough to say it requires only a skilled facilitator.

The purpose of this research was twofold: firstly, to identify the conditions under which using a Socratic approach as a tool to champion creativity was effective in an organisational context; and secondly, to develop, test and validate a model for its use.

The resulting 4E’s Socratic Model was found to be an effective tool in producing creative outcomes in the context of an organisational team. It achieved this by developing a system incorporating four critical elements: Firstly, by creating an environment that gave participants the personal freedom to provide an opinion in a non-threatening context. According to Sawyer (2006) this is a prerequisite for creativity to emerge.

Secondly, by providing encouragement to think creatively, outside normal operating constraints. This factor is critical in a team-based environment where members have disparate levels of individual creativity as shown in the creativity indices of teams studied in this research;

Thirdly, by giving recognition that each team member’s opinion is valid and valued. Recognition helps instil a sense of control over the environment that increases the likelihood of a person thinking and acting creatively (Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1987); and fourthly, by challenging participants to go beyond the common wisdom to create something new and innovative. Challenge, however, must be enough to stimulate debate without producing unproductive conflict (Isaksen & Erkvall, 2010). The 4E’s Socratic model created an environment where this balance was effectively maintained.

Implications for managers

The 4E’s Socratic model contributes to managerial practice
in five ways; firstly, by using a systems perspective to define a specific process based on the use of a Socratic dialogue to produce a creative outcome in an organisational context. Bordieu (1966) said that creativity is dependent on the relationship between the creator(s) and their position in the social system in which creativity takes place. The 4E’s Socratic model describes such a system, where the individual players are supplanted in favour of the group in an environment directed by a neutral facilitator. The resulting process overcame deficiencies in individual creativity and team member relationships, but in order to thrive in an organisational context requires cultural tolerance of a creative mindset. It also challenges existing perceptual and knowledge structures that Grisold & Peschl (2017) say are prerequisite in innovation and new knowledge creation.

Secondly, by incorporating a structured questioning process it avoids the common problem of group-think but doesn’t inhibit idea generation. It achieves this by facilitating a sense of flow within the group. Structure was built into the questioning process by adding two extra dimensions (question type and cognition) to the single dimension Socratic dialogue. The question-type dimension starts with questions that explore concrete knowledge rather than opinions and then progresses onto abstract questions (aiding synthesis) and then creative questions that produce new meaning. This addition also encouraged people with less creative efficacy to participate without fear of ridicule and went a long way towards the establishment of collective efficacy within the team. The second dimension overlaid this by introducing cognition into the mix. This encouraged more equal participation and resulted, in the words of one participant, in “minimising misunderstandings” and ensuring a “shared understanding”.

Thirdly, the study found that creativity in teams is not dependent on individual creativity skills. Amabile’s (1983) componential model of creativity suggests creativity emerges from a combination of task motivation, domain and creativity relevant skills. The 4E’s Model suggests that a creative outcome in a group context is not dependent on individual creativity and that it comes instead from a combination of task motivation, domain-relevant skills and group interaction. In effect, individual creativity skills were replaced by the creative skills of the group that were harnessed by the sense of flow that emerged during the process. The sense of collective efficacy resulting from this appeared to positively affect overall creativity.

The fourth contribution is that use of the 4E’s Socratic model overcomes differences in professional backgrounds of participants. Foreman-Peck and Travers (2015) point out that the Socratic dialogue is not suitable for dialogues between participants of different professions and suggest that a Socratic dialogue doesn’t take into account contextual aspects or allow for improvisation (two things they say are essential). By contrast, in this study, three of the organisations comprised participants from different professions and in each case the dialogue was concluded successfully by incorporating both context and improvisation. In the first instance, recognition of contextual elements is reliant on the skill of the facilitator but is supported by the integration of both question type and cognition stage. This helps expose commonalities and promote agreement on various points of fact that stop a dialogue from stalling. In the second instance, improvisation, the 4E’s model’s focus on establishing flow promotes the feeling of collegiality that overrides traditional professional loyalties.

The final contribution is the documentation of a system that produces group flow. It does this through the process of exposing, debating and reconstituting to produce new understanding. The success of this approach relied on a collective flow being produced from motivated rather than creative individuals. It also addresses Csikszentmihalyi’s (2015) statement that “…we still know very little, about the specific motivational values of different ways of patterning information.” (P59).

The 4E’s Socratic model also meets all six of Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer’s (1995) prerequisites for a successful creative process (social interaction, synthesis, knowledge, commitment, insight and challenge). It does this by a process of turning information from a variety of individuals into knowledge that is accepted by the group, which Kessels (2001) says is fundamental to a successful dialogue.
### Ideas for practice

For managers wishing to trial the 4E's Socratic Model in their organisations the following facilitators worksheet will be useful:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Question types</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explore</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **What do we currently believe about the issue?** | **Knowledge** what, where, when, why, who.  
**Comprehension** explain, compare, give examples. | Establish a sense of a shared common goal by beginning with a dialogue to establish agreement on the question itself. Focus on engendering a desire to produce a practical outcome that will improve the likelihood of an idea being implemented. |
| **Examine**    |                           |                                                                                                                                         |
| **What evidence supports that belief?** | **Application** consider, solve, apply (to a new situation).  
**Analysis** what are the pros and cons? What is missing? | During the examination encourage personal story telling which will help to develop a collective consciousness. It is also a way to help members of the group to drop their defenses. |
| **Evaluate**   |                           |                                                                                                                                         |
| **What conflicting views are there?** | **Synthesis** what are the links between…. and …..?  
**Evaluation** defend your choice, justify. | Positive feedback is another tool that can lead to increased group efficacy and is particularly important when seeking conflicting views. Focus on separating ideas expressed from the individual expressing them. |
| **Elect**      |                           |                                                                                                                                         |
| **Where does this dialogue lead us?** | **Decision and resolution** | Collective consciousness (and ultimately creativity) can evolve from a sense that contributions are group ones rather than personal ones. Enhance this sense by a process of summing up at relevant points in a dialogue to show how new knowledge or understanding has evolved from the contributions of individuals to form a collective opinion. This is particularly important during this final stage where you need buy-in to a group agreement. |

*Figure 5: 4Es Socratic Model Worksheet*
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perspective on cognition matters for innovation and knowledge creation. A framework towards leaving behind our projections from the past for creating new futures. Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 34(3), 335-353.


The effectiveness of Brand Integration in television programming, and how it resonates with today’s audiences

Anna Ogilby

In the last few decades product placement has matured and become more sophisticated in the marketing environment. Branded products are no longer just ‘placed’; they are woven into entertainment content making a stronger emotional connection with the consumer. The outcome is a concept the advertising industry is calling Branded Entertainment or Sponsorship Integration or simply Brand Integration, a convergence of advertising and entertainment (Hudson & Hudson, 2006). Some examples include Coles challenges in the hit TV series Masterchef; McCafe “Saves the Day” awards in The Block; and Holden Trailblazers shipped to save the contestants in Survivor.

In modern media, the sheer volume of choice, combined with the consumer desire to avoid advertising, and the advent of streamed content, has meant that to remain financially viable content producers have welcomed brand integration. Given audiences today are becoming increasingly harder to reach, brands are borrowing off the television show’s personality in a strategy that allegedly allows brands to “brand rub” off the show. This influences consumers to feel that the brand sponsorship is aligned to their viewing values through the personality traits of the show.

Through this brand/television show alignment, research has found an increase in automatic positive brand associations with consumers. A study conducted by House 51 (TV Sponsorships Deliver for Brands, 2017), reinforces audiences’ positive brand attitudes as television show enthusiasts were twice as fast as non-viewers to agree that they would recommend the sponsoring brand of the series/episode. Furthermore, when brand integration is a good fit for the show, key brand health metrics for viewers of the sponsored show were 5 percentage points higher than for non-viewers. Brand health metrics continue to increase in fully integrated series partnerships – in these instances, brand health metrics for viewers of the television show increased by 8.6 percentage points above non-viewers.

One case that demonstrates effectiveness of brand integration on Australian television was that of the in-show sponsorship of Holden in Australian Survivors. In 2017, Holden returned as a key partner of the show with the aim of driving awareness for their Holden Trailblazer. The 12-week partner-
ship was integrated through programming, online and outdoor media, and events. As part of the sponsorship, Holden shipped a brand-new Trailblazer to Samoa to become an integral part of the contestant’s challenge. The effectiveness and industry media coverage of this integration resulted in it being extended through additional programming vehicles on Ten’s network such as The Project and Gogglebox, extending audience touchpoints and reach. When surveyed by Network 10 post the series airing, consumers were asked what brands they considered when looking to purchase a mid-sized SUV – 35% of Australian Survivor enthusiasts selected the Holden Trailblazer; Holden site traffic increased by 411%, and brand engagement increased by 636%. (MCN, 2019).

The rise in media streaming has become audience’s way of avoiding advertisements, through their practice of avoiding television advertisements by switching channels, diverting attention to tables/devices and skipping ads on streaming services. This change in consumer behaviour, according to Tanner (2016), causes marketers to shift their focus to in-show brand integration; after all, brand integration is much more difficult to skip given the clear strategy to weave product into storyline, which is evidenced in the Holden/ Survivor case. Tanner states that when an in-show integration placement is perfectly matched with the first ad post branded exposure (ie – Holden integration moment, followed up by Holden brand TVC), audience drop off rate (channel switch) is reduced by 5% which is also good for the channel.

However, like most marketing strategies, ethical consequences have been raised concerning the underlying subconscious manipulation present (Gupta, Balasubramanian, & Klassen, 2000). Controversy particularly centres around younger audiences, who are at most risk due to the persuasive nature of marketing – for example in brand integration of fast food products (Brown et al, 2017). Media is often a large part of a child’s life, and they are especially susceptible to marketing messages in popular music, television and movies, particularly when they involve celebrities and popular characters (Sherman, 2010). With this lack of media knowledge and differentiation, Sherman suggests that younger consumers can’t necessarily be aware of the effect of a placement on their choices, and thus may not be making informed choices, particularly when placements are covert.

Conclusion

Hudson & Hudson (2006) theorise that the more seamlessly a brand is integrated into the storyline, the more effective the memory recall is in comparison to number of placement views. For greater audience brand recall and recognition, the product should be prominently placed rather than simply appearing in the background and idolised characters/celebrities can significantly influence audience retention and engagement.

As branded integration becomes an increasingly pervasive form of marketing communication it may lose its novelty and become subject to the clutter that has characterised advertising over the last few decades. Further research is required to evaluate brand integration characteristics and how they impact differently on consumer reaction and memory.

Ideas for practice

Based on this brief overview of the brand integration space the following checklist can be used when considering the use of integration into media content:

1. Have a clear checklist of who the brand target audience is (both demographic and psychographic).

2. Scope a television program that this audience commonly connects/engages with. Does the brand align with the tone and messaging of the television program? If so, how can the brand be integrated in a way to promote the correct messaging whilst making an impact on the audience?

3. Working with the content producer, build an integration content strategy that is clear and consistent, and can easily adapt or be repurposed to suit different media channels.

4. Sign off on guaranteed integration/incidentals, production budget and media amplification budget to avoid budget blowouts.

5. Ensure that the network production team are briefed on correct brand messaging.

6. Monitor production to closely track integration executions and ensure all guarantees are met.
REFERENCES


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Call for papers

Interested authors should, in the first instance, email an abstract that includes implications for management and practitioners, to the Editor, Dr Philip Dennett at philip.dennett@cud.ac.ae