

2003 Fall Conference Report

Creativity in the Workplace: How to be Your Creative-Best in Today's Challenging Information Environment

Friday, November 14, 2003

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Student Center

Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City

On November 14th Dr. Gerard Puccio, Director of the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State University, led a group of academic, medical, and special Librarians through a day full of discussion, academic theory, quizzes, brainstorming, and sculpture activities all about creativity and how to tap into our own creativity in our every day work environments.

We agreed there are a few constants in all work places, namely change and the need for problem-solving skills, thus the need for the study of creativity. As a group we defined creativity partially as: synergy; innovation; process; risk-taking; self-expression; and play. Then we were asked why creativity was important, and the following were some of our suggestions: team building; limited funds; need for consistency of service; being prepared; and the ability to see through obstacles. Dr. Puccio defined creativity as: the ability to modify self-imposed constraints; production of novel and useful ideas; and making a change that sticks (for awhile).

Group work was an important component of the workshop and tables were arranged into 6 groups where our first activity was to construct a sculpture of the idea of creativity using only newspapers and masking tape. Our directive was to make it as large and tall as possible. In 20 short minutes six newspaper sculptures towered over our heads as each group described their inspiration and the title of their artwork.

This team-building exercise then led us into a discussion of what environmental factors help foster creativity, such as: clean, well-equipped office environment; supportive colleagues; individuality; appreciate strengths in others; and shared governance.

Dr. Puccio then presented us with a free association exercise designed to break us of thinking inside the box. We were hesitant at first, but after the first go round, we got comfortable with writing down everything, and the number of words the group produced increased dramatically.

The afternoon was devoted to a personality inventory that tried to determine each participant's preferred activities in the creative process. Knowing which part of the creative process you prefer helps you to take advantage of your strengths and compensate for weaknesses.

At the end of the day, we walked away from the table with new ideas and a new outlook to approach our problems at work.