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A Proposed Model for the Formulation of Creativity Research

The purpose of this article is to share a preliminary approach to the planning of future creativity research. The developers of the Research Planning Matrix (RPM)[1] represent diverse organizations and centers for the study of creativity. The article represents a synthesis based on many accumulated years of research and study on creativity. The authors have attempted to provide an illustration of cooperative efforts to organize and stimulate some productive dialogue for those interested in creativity research.

Although it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a comprehensive historical review of the field of creativity research,[2] it is important to view the RPM within some meaningful frame of reference. It is now 34 years since J. P. Guilford's pivotal presidential address to the American Psychological Association in which the central importance of creative talent in industry, government, education, art and science was pointed out. Guilford (1950) identified the appalling neglect of the study of creativity. He indicated that less than two-tenths of one percent of the books and articles indexed in the Psychological Abstracts for the first 23 years of its publication related directly to creativity. Since this landmark address, the number of studies, articles, books and conferences on the subject of creativity has increased dramatically.

[1]Dr. Geir Kaufmann, Professor of Cognitive Psychology at the University of Bergen, Norway, and Mrs. Madelon Solowey, Director of the Institute for the Development of Intellectual Potential at the C. W. Post Center of Long Island University, New York, were active contributors to the development of the RPM and were present at the meetings held in Amagansett, New York.

[2]For a more comprehensive treatment of this topic, see Stein (1974) and Biondi and Parnes (1976).

able. Researchers and students could select these as problems to be solved. That would advance our knowledge and understanding of creativity—and so the work for the future would be cut out for us. With our desire for a valid understanding of the field through serious cooperative research the field might move forward positively.

The Research Formulation Group has intended to invite cooperative planning and input efforts in order to design the RPM. Although the matrix may appear to be in "final form," this is not the understanding of the designers. In fact, we hope that this matrix is analyzed and redesigned to be more useful to fit specific research projects. We have attempted to survey the field and present an arrangement which fuses the fewest elements necessary to assist researchers in formulating meaningful inquiry. As a result, we plan to modify the model where necessary to provide more relevance to individual needs. We plan to initiate thinking and dialogue which will result in more cooperative integration of research efforts in the field of creativity.

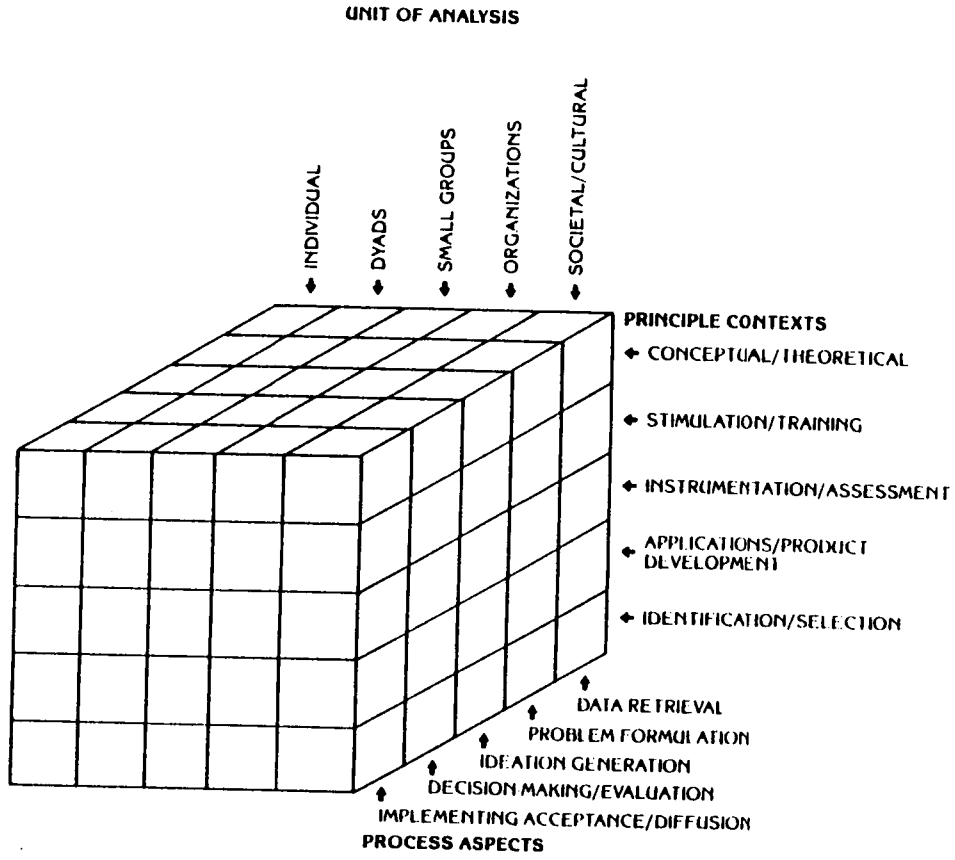
Formulation of a classification scheme is not, then, a radical idea. The question becomes: Does the classification proposal offered here offer you efficiencies or assistance in thinking about research in creativity? At first it might appear that creativity is too subtle and complicated to yield to anything less than a very complicated classification scheme. Yet, biologists have developed a classification system which cannot easily accommodate the platypus or the creeping slime mold—untidy creatures which do not fit easily into pigeonholes. While creativity research may be populated with more platypi and ambulatory fungi than primates and algae, yet there may be nonobvious connections between research findings that could be revealed if we had encouragement to look.

Ideally, a classification matrix will assist and encourage:

a. The organization of existing creativity research.
b. The planning of future research projects.
c. The sharing of data and dialogue among researchers.
d. Evaluation of research-funding priorities both by those who seek and those who distribute funds.

The RPM is arrayed as a cube. It is not intended to be a prescriptive model nor a theoretical entity like Guilford's SI. The proposed matrix might eventually serve as a framework for an active model. Some consideration was given to other geometries. A sphere, a cylinder or a tree diagram might be more suggestive. However, the group concluded that theoretical assumptions should dictate the eventual shape of the

FIGURE 1



some researchers may focus on establishing a corporate environment (an organizational unit of analysis) to facilitate innovation (a stimulation or training context). In this case, the researcher may wish to focus on idea-generating techniques. Some other researchers may have the same unit of analysis and context, but prefer to examine problem formulating techniques.

The matrix has many potential uses which we will discuss in subsequent publications. Were this an article intended to actually encourage the adaptation of the matrix as it has been developed, we would have provided a number of sample classifications and some illustrations of its use. However, instead of stating the potential implications of the matrix, we are encouraging some active involvement in its more final development. In fact, there are two ways the reader can become involved. One way is to write a critique or provide some alternative configuration or elements to the existing proposed RPM. This written response will be examined and if it is included in a publication, the contribution will be acknowledged and credited. These suggestions should be sent to Dr. Stan Gryskiewicz who directs the Creativity Development Division at the Center for Creative Leadership.

A more interactive way for the reader to become involved in the matrix is to attend the 30th Annual Creative Problem-Solving Institute (CPSI). A Creativity Research Symposium entitled "Frontiers in Creativity Research" is being planned as a part of the program. Should this avenue be of interest, the reader should contact Dr. Scott G. Isaksen who directs the Interdisciplinary Center for Creative Studies at the State University College at Buffalo. Enrollment information for the 30th CPSI is also available by writing directly to the Creative Education Foundation (1300 Elmwood Avenue, 214 Chase Hall, Buffalo, New York 14222).

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