

INTROSPECTIVE COURSE

IN CREATIVITY

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By
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

INTROSPECTIVE COURSE
IN CREATIVITY

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DEDICATION

I want to first express my gratitude to anyone, at any place or time within my life, who has taught me something; guided and advised me in something; cared for, helped, or supported me when I was in need of something; and inspired me with something. For it is from those individuals that this project was able to take form.

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Sincerely Yours,
Gabrielle Marie Luo

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ABSTRACT

Creativity is an intrinsic aspect of being human and having the resources to be able to express it freely within life is an essential priceless asset. Despite this innateness, humanity currently faces a difficulty in being able to access and express its creativity. **Creativity** is a continuous, permanent and transcendent way of living, creating the self from the self, a giving of form to the experience of our inner self. It is an introspective process and state of living that naturally births original ideas, unique insights, and valuable, self-satisfying everyday decisions. The Introspective Course in Creativity was formed in to facilitate direct experiences of the creative process on an individual basis, sharing how to authentically express uniqueness. Combining various researched-based exercises and activities that promote a creative state, named the Creative Gateways, correspondingly and uniquely the course immerses students into an array of states of awareness, from the ordinary reality of the conscious to the non-ordinary unconscious, with the belief that each have the potential for creativity to arise. It is within the course's metacognitive framework that students learn *how* they become creative within each of the Creative Gateways or states of awareness and are able to draw upon their own personal experiences for further inspiration and guidance into a Creative State. This course can be taught within any educational institution, creativity center, community center or as a part of a retreat to enhance personal creativity. Creativity is needed now more than ever within our world to overcome and transcend challenges and obstacles but also as a pivotal means to carry humanity to reach their ultimate potential, living fulfilled within our purpose.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Creativity has been described as a “nebulous” word, indicating something different to everyone with no concrete meaning and a rather complex phenomenon, belonging only to the extremely gifted. Creativity is one of the most powerful capacities we have, and at our very core and fundamental to our nature (Andreasen, 2011; Richards, 2007). Whether we are raising a family, relocating across the country, or dreaming about what our future holds, we are engaging our creativity. It is believed that it is our birthright and purpose as human beings to use and express this gift (Fox, 2004). From the New World Encyclopedia, creativity is “understood as the ability to utilize everything at hand in nature to transform our living environment and beautify our lives and is what distinguishes human beings from other creatures.” Human beings have this ability to create our own existence; just by looking around one can simply see the results of your own or someone else’s creativity. Creativity stems from the seed of humankind, and I believe that it should not only be a novelty, but a necessity to have the ability to draw this innate capability to the forefront of our lives.

While I understand the impulse to overlook and perhaps take for granted this privileged ability we have, it is virtually an existential necessity in our present day world to develop this inherent skill. Given the ongoing climate crisis, continuously more complicated ways of living and global health pandemics, our individual human

creativity may need to be called upon. Humanity knows that there needs to be something *new* and *different* from whatever we have been doing, if we are to thrive and flourish. Now, more than ever, is a time when creativity is needed to enrich society, the economy (Burnard, 2006), as well as the educational system (Craft, 2006; Marquis & Henderson, 2015; Robinson & Aronica, 2016; Shaheen, 2010). More broadly, it has also been suggested that the evolution of our culture at a universal level can be affected by enhancing individual creativity (Richards, 2007). Each individual has a role to play that ultimately evolves a culture. Though, can humanity afford to suppress and deny its individual members creativity of the interest of, say, more efficient production? Moreover, and probably most directly, we can affect our health and wellbeing (Hughes & Wilson, 2017, Richards, 2007) as well as our personal growth (Richards, 2007) and development (Campbell, 2000) by actively expressing our individual human creativity throughout our lives. Practicing creativity has immense value to us in not only a global way, but affects us individually at a personal level, operating on the very fundamentals of optimal health and wellbeing. By expressing individual creativity freely, we are able to reveal the innermost aspect of who we are, building strength and a deeper understanding of life, ultimately leading us to our fullest potential (Richards, 2007). Creativity not only fulfills us by meeting basic human needs, it is seen as a way to truly know ourselves in a deep and meaningful way. Given this wide spectrum of purpose, creativity offers each individual something it simply cannot be disregarded.

Statement of Problem

If we consider our history on the planet, human beings are not the strongest, nor are we designed for the extremities of the world's diverse climates, yet we occupy almost every part of the planet. Human beings cannot naturally fly away from danger or hide in camouflage, yet we have survived and thrived through an array of many conditions and events. What sets us apart from the strongest, most adaptable animals on earth is our creativity. Creativity itself has been our greatest asset in reconstructing the world for our benefit, survival, as well as for our own pleasure (Runco, 2014).

Creativity has been a crucial component to the flourishing evolution of humanity, though with advanced technological inventions and reliance on those devices, perhaps creativity has not been able to be properly used the way it has been in the past. In our modern-day world, creativity is not only a survival mechanism, but a way to evolve within the fast-paced and highly competitive world (Runco, 2014).

“The zeitgeist (German for ‘spirit of the time’) has shifted toward the recognition that creativity is the most important ‘competency’ for individuals and organizations” (Gelb, 2014, pp. xvii). Gelb has recognized that creativity is an essential leitmotif of our contemporary time. In a recent study, 70% of 5,000 people from 5 different countries surveyed in the Adobe ‘State of Create’ study felt that being creative is valuable to society (Adobe, 2016). One of the leading creativity researchers today, M. Runco believes that creativity is more important now than ever before, “...creativity is a useful and effective response to evolutionary changes” (Runco, 2014, pg. 658). Runco acknowledges the evolutionary quality that creativity

provides. As the world becomes more computerized and mechanized, one of the most sought-after skills will be the ability to think in a non-linear manner (Robinson & Aronica, 2016). Similarly, a 2016 report by the World Economic Forum predicted that the top three job skills in 2020 will be complex problem solving, critical thinking and creativity (2016). Though these three faces are differentiated here, they are very much interconnected, and stem from the same ideologies, as one gains competency in creativity, they will ultimately become a better critical thinker and problem solver.

Despite these notable remarks, only one in four people describe themselves as creative and a mere thirty-one percent report they are living up to their creative potential (Adobe, 2016). Considering these statistics, we are faced with the following question: why are so few people not living within their creative potential? About two-thirds believe that creativity is being stifled by their educational systems (Adobe, 2016). Educational systems have the responsibility of preparing individuals for their professional careers. This bewildering statistic is a call to re-evaluate our educational priorities. In a study that asked professors at a university to show how much they value creativity within their various disciplines, the overwhelming majority of respondents selected either “important” or “extremely important” (n = 538, 87.8%) (Marquis & Henderson, 2015). It is obvious that educators value the skill of creativity, yet students feel education systems stifle creativity (Adobe, 2016). Academic institutions are the place where students develop valuable life and professional skills, and perhaps should be where they fine-tune essential skills like creativity. If students don’t develop creativity at a university, where in the world can

we expect them to? It has been said that most graduating professionals are capable only of applying what is common knowledge in conventional ways (De Alancar & Fleith, 2004). If creativity is a vital part of what it means to be human, *and* if it is currently not valued enough or facilitated enough, then what we have is a situation where a vital human need is being stifled and suppressed. In a world where the media saturates thought, further placing humanity in a more susceptible kind of standardized conditioning, it becomes even hard or nearly impossible to be creative if we are not careful. Attempts to provide an enriching inner source of creativity appear futile. If more courses in creativity are easily accessible for students at the university level, they may be more likely to integrate this knowledge into their every-day lives, professional careers, and contribute to restoring an essential component of human nature.

Purpose

Creativity is an essential skill for the 21st century that is innate in all people and can continuously grow when nurtured. We constantly rely on authentic ideas for almost every aspect of our professional and personal lives. If creativity is to be learned and nurtured, then the education system is where individuals can acquire essential life skills. Studies show that creativity is indeed a trainable skill (Ansburg & Dominowski, 2000; Scott, Leritz, & Mumford, 2004). Humans, by nature, have the ability and desire to learn. As Aristotle has commented as he dedicated his life to transforming thought as we know it, “Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.” Creativity is about learning who we are and how to express ourselves.

Despite this knowledge, “most educational institutions do little to infuse cognitive strategies proven to enhance creative thinking abilities into their courses and curricula” (Puccio, 2017). There are a few colleges that recognize this importance of teaching creativity yet do not have it as a part of general education. Though universities traditionally have not offered many courses in creativity, there is a very clear need of more accessible training programs within the field (Gibson, 2010). Since 1967, there has been an enormous expansion in creativity studies within universities throughout the world (Xu, McDonnell & Nash, 2005). The training of creativity has spread through these institutions in an attempt to cultivate a world that is able to draw upon and to express their unique creativity to better existing systems, come up with new ideas, and to create new paradigms. In a more recent article it has been emphatically noted, “that while creativity has always been essential to survival and success, life in the 21st century, perhaps like no other time in modern history, has rendered creativity a must-have professional and life skill” (Puccio, 2017, p. 330). Though this statement was made in 2017, currently with the ongoing climate crisis, the recent demonstrations against systemic racism and police brutality, as well as the virus pandemic and political meltdown all give us reasonable cause to utilize our ability to come up with novel and useful ideas. Creativity is one of the rare traits that is seen as imperative to have in both our professions and as an everyday life skill. The fact is that more training courses need to be made available to people on how to be creative, because this ability is being lost, or not utilized in a way that the world needs. The purpose of this project is to provide educational institutions and

businesses with an accessible course that can enhance creativity for both adult students and professionals.

Significance

There are some existing creativity courses currently being taught in universities, businesses, and creativity centers worldwide. Their approach to teaching creativity largely involves practicing problem solving by exercising various divergent thinking methods. I agree that these are valuable skills needed to learn to be creative, though there is little emphasis on courses that actually give individuals the opportunity to realize *how* they became creative, to reflect upon it and to observe its emergence, its growth. This is the principal metacognitive awareness that is needed in order to empower the individual. It allows them to return to the creativity mindset and be able to express creativity whenever it is needed within their lives. The existing courses share a set of skills taught and learned, addressing some aspects of creativity process through the mind within ordinary consciousness. From my personal investigation, there is very little emphasis placed on acknowledging what state of consciousness creativity manifests within largely because of the domineering belief that creativity is only within the mind and concern intellectual matters of consciousness. People often think they can brainstorm their way to a creative solution or production when they'd realize that there lies more potential within spending time in a liminal state between dream and waking life. I believe that if individuals can recognize *how* they became creative, they may realize that creativity stems from an array of states and are more likely to draw upon that state to live more creatively,

transforming their everyday lives. By learning from personal experience, a person is more likely to turn that experience into acquired wisdom and be able to call upon that when needed in life situations. A modern leading researcher in positive psychology and creativity, Dr. M. Csikszentmihalyi, views creativity as a *state* that all humans can find themselves in everyday life, characterized by a feeling of great absorption with the activity at hand, and where the feeling of time ceases to matter or mean anything or even be noticeable at all, coined *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). He has interviewed thousands of individuals across cultures and ages and has discovered that this state is something *all* humans experience and find it as the most enjoyable part of being human. Correspondingly, William Blake has elegantly reminisced within the same state in his opening of *Auguries of Innocence*: “To see a World in a Grain of Sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower / Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand / And Eternity in an hour.” (Blake, 1863). If everyone has the ability to experience this state of true enjoyment, of complete unlimited potential within each moment and to create intuitively, yet relatively few people actually experience it, or actually most of us are not aware of it, learning it needs to be made more accessible. As some researchers and leaders within the field of creativity view creativity as a state, I believe there are an array of states that we naturally transfer in and through, and each have the ability to bring about a creative act. The state from which a person associates the origin of their creativity is unique to each individual. In my project, I have created an educational course in creativity for adults using research-based theories as well as popular practices known to improve creativity, called the Creative Gateways. The

course will progressively move through an array of states that we commonly experience on a daily basis, but with a deeper attentiveness to them. The emphasis of the course is on teaching students how to recognize what state of consciousness they were in when they came up with an original creative solution or piece of art. From there, they learn how to cultivate their unique Creative State and how to revisit it, empowering the creativity within, whenever it is needed.

This addition of turning inward while performing various creativity exercises will enable the student to embody the creative process fully and to draw upon their personal creativity more readily. Creativity is about expressing what is unique to the individual, and the more we gain awareness of who we are, the more we can express our originality and help to turn the world's dilemmas into assets.

This course can ultimately be offered at any adult educational setting, creative center or business and will enrich the community that adopts it. Students and individuals from any discipline are welcome and encouraged to share and to learn from one another and from themselves.

Definitions of Core Concepts

Creativity: A continuous, permanent and transcendent way of living and creating the self from the self, a giving of form to the experience of your inner self. It is an introspective process and state of living that naturally births original ideas, unique insights, and valuable, self-satisfying everyday decisions.

Creative Gateways: Activities and exercises that promote a Creative State. They connect the person experiencing them with their true, inner self.

Creative State: An ordered state of being that occurs when there is more fluent free association; increased ability to play spontaneously with hypotheses, metaphors, paradoxes, transformations or relationships; heightened ability for visual imagery and fantasy; capacity to restructure problems in a larger context; heightened sensory inputs; heightened aesthetic sensibility; and having subconscious data more accessible (Fadiman, 2011). It can also be characterized by M. Csikszentmihalyi's concept of *flow*, where the individual experiences an "in the zone" experience characterized by meeting the personal needs of the individual; it is effortless, relaxed and a fully present state of being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The Creative State is unique to the individual experiencing it, though it is at its peak when associations can be freely made between states of consciousness. Similarly, as within Csikszentmihalyi's concept of *flow*, being completely focused on the activity at hand, coupled with a lost sense of time, and having no sense of ego (1990), mirrors the free flowing capability to connect the various states of consciousness.

Human Awareness: "Usually, these mental states are accessible to consciousness, in that people are generally aware of what they are thinking, what they want and feel, and what they are doing" (Kihlstrom, 2013, p. 1). We are able to experience directly our body and intellect within everyday consciousness and this is a part of our ordinary reality.

Cosmic Consciousness: A neurophysiologic state of consciousness from which creativity can originate that does not belong to the ‘human awareness’ states. These include: dreams, imagination, and visions.

Summary

Creativity is seen as not only a valuable asset to the evolution of our species as well as the key to solving problems in an ever-changing, fast-paced world, it is a birthright and the essence of what it means to be human. Creativity is a capacity that generates novelty, a uniqueness within ourselves. The world needs humanity to utilize this skill because humans are faced with profound existential threats. Creative approaches to our problems could free us from our burden and allow us to escape the trap we’ve laid for ourselves and fallen into. As George Christoph Lichtenberg once put it, ‘things must change if they are to be any good at all.’ Furthermore, human creativity can affect our health and wellbeing, personal growth and development at an individual level and even the evolution of our culture at a universal level. A course promoting creativity aims to respond to current challenges and problems by facilitating novel and innovative approaches to existing failures and deficiencies. Additionally, in order to give experience meaning and be able to draw upon its richness and value, individuals need to be able to recognize where it originates from within themselves. The educational system and business establishments need to foster creativity within their existing structures by providing accessibility to courses that focus on this basic human quality. This college-level professional course emphasizes individual investigation, observation, and contemplation where students can have an

intimate relationship with their own internal states of awareness, bringing them back to the core of their existence.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a sense of mystery and wonder when it comes to creativity. What exactly it is, where it comes from and how we can cultivate it in our society remain open questions. It has been noted from the Handbook of Creativity that creativity is among the most complex of human behaviors being influenced by a wide array of developmental, social, and economic experiences, and that it manifests itself in different ways in a variety of domains (Runco & S. Sakamoto, 1999). This review of the literature first defines creativity in its many facets based upon past research and leaders within the field. Then it provides a history on the spectrum of views on the topic. From there, the review shifts into discussing how awareness of the various states that we inhabit have potential for creativity to flourish with relevant examples of research and literature. A summary is then provided to conceptualize the course in creativity's framework.

Defining Creativity

Creativity reaches beyond and through the disciplines of psychology, philosophy, art, the sciences, and education. There is a fascination with the source, functioning and purpose of this uniquely human trait. "Creativity is not separate from intelligence or artistry, but a part of the whole" (Piiro, 2004, p. 37). It is a common trait among all of humanity and modern theorists view creativity as an ability, as a

process, or as an experience that connects to one's authenticity (e.g. Piirto, 2004, Sternberg, 2006a).

Creativity has been related to a person's capacity of coming up with new, original and useful ideas, insights, inventions or objects that have a specific value (Welsh, 1980). Modern theorists on creativity take a more tangible approach, defining creativity in terms of an ability or an act, or a specific product or solution that can help promote and evolve a business (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009; Robinson & Aronica, 2016). For instance, Robinson, in his book, *Creative Schools*, defines creativity in relation to "the ability to generate new ideas and put them into use" (2016, p. 136). Creativity has also been seen as "a tool that might help to find new ways," (Surkova, 2012, p.115). Surkova developed this definition in her attempt to formulate a creativity framework in response to previous insufficient efforts toward this end. She has approached creativity as a skill necessary for humanity's evolution as we reach higher levels of human activity. Humans now have the ability to destroy the Earth and industrial capitalism has nearly wrecked the biosphere. The stakes today are high and if we don't change how we live on our planet soon, we may not be living on our planet much longer. Holm-Hadulla and Hoffmann also shared this in his research and concluded that a creative response is new, good, and relevant to the topic, enhancing our understanding of it (2012). This enhancing quality seems to be a keystone attribute to creativity. Gray also described creativity not as a product, but rather as the process of giving form in her definition: "It is the giving form to the experience of your inner self in relation to the world around you" (2009). In her

definition the experience itself is the act of creativity. Young has described creativity also as an experience, namely, “a paradoxical integration of doing and being... the integration of our logical side with our intuitive side” (1985, p. 77). With this approach, creativity doesn’t require a result in a tangible way, only the process, the act of expressing oneself as authentic is in itself, creativity. Even the most creative artist or poet doesn’t have to bring every idea or image to life, nor must every creative effort lead to a complete success. Sometimes, the experience of creativity can be like tilling soil – necessary for plants to grow but not itself the growth of a plant. Similarly, Fox has experienced creativity as a union experience, “it is a place, a space, a gathering, a union, a *where*- wherein the Divine powers of creativity and the human power of imagination join forces” (2004, p. 5). Fox describes this place as a meeting place that humans find themselves when they are in a state of meditation or emptiness.

Further back in history with the Ancient Greeks, Plato, within his revolutionary *Ion*, has referred to inspiration as being a sort of madness, or a channeling awareness and therefore a specific state humans find themselves in. Immanuel Kant, within his *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, has linked creativity to imagination (2000). Both of these accounts of creativity were very influential on the conceptions of creativity within the field of philosophy.

All of these wise theorists and revolutionaries have witnessed this aspect of humanity as a key to our ingenuity. The union of these elements is wherein creativity happens. An important significance of the definition of creativity is that it is ever-

evolving and means something slightly different to the respective contemporary culture and philosophy of a time and its understanding as well as to the individual. Within the very way creativity has manifested itself within many individuals throughout history, it makes sense to have an individualized way to learn and to embody it, in order to get the most out of this timeless treasure.

History

Floistad within his book shared:

To be human is to be creative. To be human is to be creative in various ways in a variety of fields. All one has to do in order to see this is to witness our human history. History also illustrates the fact that each of us is creative in unique ways in different historical epochs. (1993, p. 202)

Ancient and modern ideologies on creativity travel full circle in the realization that it is at the very source of our existence to be and express creativity (Fox, 2004). However, there is a spectrum of creative experiences based upon the many states humans find themselves in, and this spectrum gets at the very core of how individuals experience creativity. On one end of the spectrum, and from a more historical perspective, human intervention and control had little to do with creativity. It has been viewed as a mysterious process and was something that could not be cultivated by humankind, and was up to a higher existence to direct and choose how and whom it was to be expressed through. Humans were vessels or vehicles for forces beyond themselves, on this view. The linking of creativity to divinity is truly an ancient

ideology. The ancient Greek philosopher Plato has commented on Socrates' theory of inspiration, which is one of the first documented sources of human creativity. In his work, *The Ion*, Plato implies that God uses poets as a medium through which to speak (Jowett, 1979). In this "divine madness," it is not actually the poet or artist who is creating, he is simply a channel through which God or a higher power is channeling. Similarly, Fox (2004), described the creative state as a union with the Divine in which humans co-create, "a place where the Divine and the human are most destined to interact" (Fox, 2004, p. 5). He further elaborated this point in noting that "our ultimate act of creativity is giving birth to who we are" (Fox, 2004, p. 32). These perspectives on the origin of creativity propose a very spiritual experience. Creativity was seen as a kind of 'grace' we can make ourselves worthy of but cannot master and control on our own. On the other end of the spectrum, creativity is seen as a skill where one could learn how to live a creative life with step by step instructions on how one could cultivate this lifestyle and state of mind (e.g., Gelb, 2014; Tharp, 2003). On this view, everyone is considered to be born with an innate sense of creativity and that it is just needs to be exercised or cultivated through various exercises. Somewhere in the middle of this spectrum would lie Csikszentmihalyi, the co-founder of positive psychology, and his theory of flow. He described creativity as a state that all humans find themselves in as they go about their everyday life, characterized by a feeling of great absorption with the activity at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). He has interviewed thousands of individuals across cultures and ages and has discovered that this state of flow is something all humans

experience and find it as the most enjoyable part of being human. From this perspective, creativity is something that internally exists within the individual, simply needing the right ingredients to bring it to fruition.

As illustrated here, creativity has been differentiated in the way in which it reveals and manifests itself. It has been perceived differently and characterized in different ways. For example, it has been defined in terms of the creative person, the creative process, and the creative product (Solomon, 2009). The creative personality has been described as comprising individuals who are open to new experiences, looking at situations from all perspectives, and are frequently positive in situations where most would not be (Solomon, 2009). The field of psychology has offered this contribution to the field of creativity, and has also had the greatest contributions to the measurement of creativity through research.

In 1950, J. P. Guilford, who was the president of the American Psychological Association (APA), gave a speech that was historically viewed as inaugurating the modern interest in creativity and has bequeathed as its legacy the importance of nurturing this human attribute (Piiro, 2004; Puccio, 2017). Since then, creativity has obtained increasing academic interest throughout almost every discipline. Today, in the dynamic environment of global concerns and economic pressures, organizations are relying on employee creativity to improve innovative output (Bharadwaj & Menon, 2000; Shalley, Zhou & Oldham, 2004). Organizations acknowledged that creativity was a viable skill needed by their employees in order for them to benefit most from their employees (Cummings & Oldham, 1997). Creativity in this sense

benefited employers but not necessarily creative employees. From education to essential training within the workplace, creativity is seen as an essential aspect of the developing human. The fact is that creativity is valuable and relevant in nearly every aspect of life. This statement is reflected in the vast interest in it around the world.

More importantly, it has been noted that creativity can be enhanced and developed (Adams, 2001; Cheung, Roskamas & Fisher, 2006; Epstein, Schmidt, & Warfel, 2008, Hargrove & Nietfeld, 2015; Scott, Leritz, & Mumford, 2004). Records of the many ways in which this can happen have been documented and explored. One of the most well-known associations in creative thinking is idea generation, the ability to come up with new ideas. The literature related to the creative idea generation and associative thinking dates back to the early part of the 20th century, with Spearman's *Creative Mind*, "To gain knowledge of the machinery is to aid in the mastery of the instrument" (Spearman, 1931 p. 783). In making his comment, Spearman urges us to gain a mastery over our minds in order to fully understand the mysteries of the formulation of ideas. A very Baconian thought as well – 'knowledge is power' – if we learn how our mind work, we can use that knowledge to optimize our mental capacity and thereby augment the power of our minds as an instrument. Scientists, theorists, and philosophers early on have all understood the importance of fully exploring the mental processes involved in creativity, beginning with self-inquiry, ending with self-mastery.

These scholars have agreed that creativity was something we are all born with and that it does need a certain amount of cultivation of awareness for it to be

successful. Teaching creativity to students within higher education was seen as very important within most if not all disciplines (Bull, Montgomery & Baloché, 1995; Cheung, 2006; Kleiman, 2008; Donneley, 2004). They viewed creativity as a process and a way of life that was a part of our birthright to utilize and express. Higher education was seen as the perfect place to sharpen these skills before students set out into the world to join the workforce and be active contributors to society.

From Human Awareness to Cosmic Consciousness

Humans live in and pass through an array of states on a daily basis. It has been said that within each of these states lies the potential for creativity to manifest (Holt, Delanoy & Roe, 2004). Because of creativity's diverse applications within the world, it makes sense that there are many ways in which it can manifest. Some interesting effects of creativity upon the human have been recognized by Fadiman are: more fluent free association; increased ability to play spontaneously with hypotheses, metaphors, paradoxes, transformations or relationships; heightened ability for visual imagery and fantasy; capacity to restructure problems in a larger context; heightened sensory inputs; heightened aesthetic sensibility; and having subconscious data more accessible" (2011). These have all been noticed as key components of the creativity state. Creativity is at its peak when associations can be freely made between states of consciousness. Through reflection, this can be enriched. There is good evidence that, "the best way to generate creative thinking solutions is to build knowledge of creative thinking processes and strategies through reflection" (Hargrove & Nietfeld, 2015, p. 28). This deep reflection has its roots within philosophy, echoing the famous words

engraved near the Delphic Oracle, “know thyself.” The effort that was put into self-reflection, dwelling in our thoughts, and finding inspiration from the unknown had a tremendous impact on how creativity came into fruition (Hao et. al, 2016; Boud, 2001). The conscious reflection on the source of individual creativity, from whatever source it originated, affected creativity itself.

The Introspective Course in Creativity will move through and introduce various exercises that have all been research based, or introduced and used by artists, authors, and experts within the field of creativity as ways to enhance creativity. They each take place within a specific state of being. The following are states of consciousness that humans live in that have potential for manifestation of creativity. They can be grouped into two categories: Human Awareness and Ordinary States, on the one hand, and Cosmic Consciousness and Non-Ordinary States, on the other. Ordinary States include subcategories of the body and intellect. Non-Ordinary subcategories include dreams, imagination, visions, and cosmic consciousness.

Human Awareness & Ordinary States

“Usually, these mental states are accessible to consciousness, in that people are generally aware of what they are thinking, what they want and feel, and what they are doing” (Kihlstrom, 2013, p. 1). We are able to experience directly our body and intellect within everyday consciousness and this experience is a part of our ordinary reality. In ordinary consciousness we can access a creative state through the Gateways of the body and its senses, on the one hand, and mind and intellectual capacity, on the other.

Body. Within this state, we are aware of the body and its capabilities. The five senses of the body - sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing - are all experienced through the body. The breath, heartbeat, as well as any physical activity, such as going for a walk, circulation, moving and flowing are also experienced within and through the body. Research has shown that a semester-long course in increasing somatic awareness within individuals was a means of enhancing and fostering creativity (Haas, 1996). In becoming aware of our body and its sensations, creativity naturally arises. Research has also demonstrated that by generating fluid movement within the physical body, fluidity transfers into the mind in enhancing creative thoughts (Slepian & Ambady, 2012). Physically moving the blood, oxygen and energy within the body, makes creativity more easily accessible for the mind to express. Merely getting some physical exercise, such as walking (Oppezzo & Schwartz, 2014), has been shown to increase creative thinking. Aerobic activity has also been shown to increase mood as well as creativity (Steinberg et al, 1997). Sound has also been found to enhance sonic creativity in a recent study that analyzed the brain's capacity to encode and understand the abundance of sound (Cross, 2018). The body's senses are doorways to experience one's authenticity, one may just need the appropriate guidance in nurturing this awareness. This thought is echoed within William Blake's famous lines from his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite / For man has closed himself up, til he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern." These crevices can guide man back to realizing his potential.

Intellect. Our intellectual mind is where it is believed we come up with new, and authentic ideas (Sternberg, 2006; Gabora, 2002). This “cognitive *change* that occurs as an idea transforms from inspiration to finished product” (Gabora, 2002, p. 126) is a paramount obsession with creativity researchers. From numerous brain scans to focus groups where ideas of cross-pollination, divergent thinking, idea generation and personality tests were performed, the field of psychology has tried to examine and assess how and where this change happens. Though it remains unclear where and when this change occurs, the act of observing the thoughts of the mind and the cognitive process associated with it have been shown to have some insights. Freud (1963) coins the activity of observing the thoughts of the mind without selecting specific thoughts to focus on as free association (p. 287). The awareness of the mind and observing its thoughts are also acts of meditation. Within this area, there are numerous studies that show a positive link between meditation, mindfulness, and enhanced creativity (Horan, 2009; Lebuda, Zabelina, & Karwowski, 2015; Muller, Gerasimova, & Ritter, 2016) Two kinds of meditation studies that have been shown to increase creative thinking were mindfulness meditation and focused attention (Horan, 2009; Lebuda, Zabelina, & Karwowski, 2015; Muller, Gerasimova, & Ritter, 2016). Both of the meditation techniques involve bringing awareness to the thoughts of the mind and either observing (mindfulness) or controlling them in some way (focused attention). There were also studies that revealed a form of meditation involving writing down one’s thoughts increased creativity (e.g., Cameron, 2016; Troop, 2017). Within these studies, the exercise ‘morning pages’ introduced in

Cameron's book, *The Artists Way*, has been studied in depth. The difference in her suggested exercise and meditation was that simply by writing down our thoughts we gain a different perspective in organizing and using them, thereby offering a different approach to accessing creative thinking. In a semester-long course where students were asked to complete 'keyword' assignments, consisting of writing about a certain topic that inspired them, this exercise was shown to increase creativity within participants (Troop, 2017). This specific study supports that idea that when students are aware of their interests and actually follow through on diving deeper into those interests, creativity has more potential to be revealed. Additionally, drawing was shown to have an impact on the brain in favor of accessing creativity, particularly within the promotion of an alpha rhythm, associated with visual processing, intelligence and creativity (Belkofer, Hecke & Konopka, 2014). In conclusion, the research concerning conscious guidance of the mind and its activity in some way in order to cultivate a more creative fertile ground was plentiful and well interpreted.

Cosmic Consciousness & Non-Ordinary States

Many people assume that creativity is the act of purely conscious efforts; on the contrary, there are countless occurrences of acts of creativity occurring through non-ordinary, or other neurophysiologic states. As echoed within Goethe's famous words, "All of the thinking within the world does not bring us closer to thought." The mind can only bring us so far within the realms and reaches of our humanness. Moreover, repetitive sayings of creative people have the same insights on the source of their inspiration:

‘I can’t force inspiration. Ideas just come to me when I’m not seeking them-when I’m swimming or running or standing in the shower.’ ‘It happens like magic.’ ‘I can just see things that other people can’t, and I don’t know why.’ ‘The muse just sits on my shoulder.’ ‘If I concentrate on finding the answer it never comes, but if I let my mind just wander, the answer pops in.’

(Andreasen, 2011)

Therein lies another vaster realm from which ideas and inspiration come, that of another neurophysiologic state, one that the thinking mind simply cannot access. According to some theorists, our conscious minds are small relative to the vast capacity of the unconscious (Ellenberger, 1970). According to Jung (1962), our unconscious minds rest on an even larger structure, the collective unconscious, a universal substrate common to all humankind (Jung et al., 1973). All that we think and do comes from these depths because unconscious processes are the ground from which conscious thought first arises (Jung, 1971). By dwelling within the liminal states and accessing unconscious ground so that the ‘conscious thoughts’ that do emerge are authentic, one’s own, a product of an individual’s unique insight is reflected upon the metaphor earlier given about ‘tilling the soil.’ On the basis of Jung’s thought the unconscious has potential to affect more aspects of consciousness and our perception of it. Even more intriguing to creativity research is that it has been shown that unconscious thought generated items and ideas that were less obvious, less accessible and more creative than those of the conscious mind (Dijksterhuis &

Meurs, 2005). It would be worthwhile to try and access these other neurophysiologic states when trying to approach our inner creativity.

Within the seminal theoretical framework of creativity, Wallas' *Art of Thought* (1926), the stages of the creative process are: preparation, incubation, illumination or insight, and production or verification. This model served as an anchor from which many creativity researchers have worked (Sadler-Smith, 2015). The 'incubation' and 'inspiration' stages are to be noted here as they stem from unconscious processing. There seems to be a consensus that unconscious states of being are always at work within the creative process. This unconscious aspect of the creative process is characterized by flashes of insight that arise from unconscious reservoirs (Andreasen, 2011). The sudden inspiration that often accompanies creative acts is thought to originate from the unconscious. Recent research has even suggested that unconscious thought is superior to conscious thought in many cognitive domains (Yang, Chattopadhyay, Zhang & Dahl, 2012). The unconscious states of awareness or the non-ordinary states are immeasurable, and research is just showing us how monumental this seemingly 'non-living' aspect of our existence is. "The unconscious' is shorthand for mental states and processes that are inaccessible to introspective phenomenal awareness and voluntary control" (Kihlstrom, 2013, p. 1). Within states of the unconscious, there is generally no waking awareness. Kihlstorm elaborates that we are only aware of the unconscious indirectly through our conscious experience of them (2013). Even if we consciously access our unconscious, we can never fully explore its depths and can only observe what amounts to the surface

manifestations welling up from some deeper, more infinite source. The activities introduced within this section of the course will assist one in remembering the non-ordinary states one enters on a daily basis, as within dreams and within deep meditative states, and consciously reflecting upon them to enhance creativity.

It has been said that within the unconscious ‘psychological space’ lies the potential and ability for creativity to manifest (Holt, Delanoy & Roe, 2004). Dreams, imagination, visions and revelations that simply come without any apparent cognitive effort are of the unconscious space. “In general, much more goes on in our minds below the level of consciousness than can ever be accessed by it” (Boden, 2013). The conscious mind is the manifestation of the unconscious working beneath it, and therein lies unlimited potential to feed our creativity. Furthermore, Anton Ethrenzweig has commented that there is no sharp boundary between conscious and unconscious processes (1967). This is a repeating theme within studies of the unconscious and it seems as though science has been trying to distinguish and clarify this obscure yet essential aspect of our existence since the introduction of scientific study itself. Currently, the psychoanalytic viewpoint proposes that insight into one’s unconscious thoughts, feelings, and motivations can be helpful in understanding and changing personal constructs (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Within the literature, non-ordinary states of being have been documented as a means for enhancing creativity and will be here explored through: dreams, imagination, visions, and cosmic consciousness.

Dreams. Dreams have given inspiration to create art, music, novels, films, mathematical proofs, designs for architecture, telescopes, and computers (Barrett, 2001). “Consciousness is often considered to be markedly attenuated or absent during sleep” (Tassi & Muzet, 2001, p. 17). Dreaming has also been described by Harvard’s psychologist D. Barrett as our brain thinking in another neurophysiologic state (2001). Therefore, dreaming and the Creative Gateways associated with the state of dreaming are termed ‘non-ordinary.’ Dreams have historically been represented as a means where new ideas emerge on which our waking minds have become stuck (Barrett, 2001). Both Freud and Jung have written extensively about the significance of dreams and their ability to bring about inspiration (Pirto, 2004). Jung wrote that dreams capture the collective unconscious which he related to a part of all humanity’s unconscious instincts (Jung, 1936). Jung defines dreams as “involuntary, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche and ... therefore pure products of nature” (Jung, 1936, p. 102). They by nature have the ability to connect one to a limitless source of possibility.

Presently, there is more research on the unconscious state of dreams and the way they can influence our creativity than on any of its other aspects. Specifically, when a practice of remembering dreams was implemented, creativity can be affected. When participants were asked to keep a journal recalling their nightly dreams in a daily dream log, it was found that this practice fostered aspects of creativity (Sierra-Siegert, Jay, Flores, & Garcia, 2016). A daily practice bringing awareness to dreams can be an integral part to the learning process of the development of creativity.

Imagination. The relation of human imagination to thought and action has been of interest to scholars at least since the time of the early Greek philosophers (Pelaprat & Cole, 2011). Statues depicting humans in such a realistic form must have bewildered the people admiring them, as they have been said to ‘come to life.’ Even with the first forms of art, however, 20,000 years ago within the caves of Lascaux, it has been suggested that the birth of homo sapiens arose in connection with expressing imagination in cave paintings (Bataille, 1955). Creativity is synonymous with the birth of our species. It has been supposed as what sets us apart from other animals as well as from other primates (Bataille, 1955). Within the Oxford English Dictionary, imagination has been defined as “the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality” (Stevenson & Waite 2011). It is also defined as a “creative ability” interestingly enough (Stevenson & Waite 2011). With this definition, imagination is a natural capacity that humans possess and is clearly defined as being an integral part of creativity and existing within non-ordinary states of being. The term ‘active imagination’ was applied by Jung to refer to a means of mobilizing the psyche through an image of a chain of images (Schaverien, 2005). It was described by Jung (1951) as a concentration on some impressive but unintelligible dream-image, or on a spontaneous visual impression. For Jung, selection of the thought was important because it allowed for an elaboration to take place based upon a patient’s interest (Schaverien, 2005). One must first choose what to focus on, and then apply the skill of imagining to the idea.

Visions. Visions are experienced within a non-ordinary state because they do not require our conscious effort in creating them. There is no way to guarantee that they come, though one may cultivate a state wherein they are likely to come, as within shamanic journeys. According to Ingerman, a modern well known shaman, within her book, shamanism is the most ancient spiritual practice known to humankind and is a form of meditation combined with focused intention (2010). Although shamanic journeys have been used throughout many cultures worldwide for many purposes, the way in which this project utilizes them can be related to a definition proposed by Crockett. In his book, he utilized the shamanic journey to cultivate creativity and explains that the visual imagination combined with the rhythmic power of the drum transports you into non-ordinary states of reality (2009, p. 98). These states of consciousness have been compared to a night dream, though there is a certain degree of awareness within them that separates them from the dreaming state. Visions can also come through in ordinary everyday life. They may manifest themselves when one is daydreaming or mind-wandering. Again, there is no fine line between a 'vision' state and when a person is experiencing their everyday lives.

Cosmic consciousness. "Experiencing a non-ordinary state of consciousness can lead to insight, integration and transformation into a more wholesome equilibrium which is healing." (Crowley, 2005). This state has been described by great meditators in Eastern Philosophies. "Traditional Eastern ideological systems of psychological and spiritual development presume the existence of a 'higher stage of consciousness'"

(Tassi & Muzet, 2001, p. 11). Likewise with Plato's theory of forms – to behold forms is to experience a higher stage of consciousness and in the *Theaetetus* Socrates famously describes the philosopher as having a view-from-above, as it were, looking down on ordinary life from a height and observing that the human pursuit of wealth, political power, and class superiority over others is absurd and caused by a kind of myopia or short-sightedness on the part of those who are stuck on the ground-level and never see anything but what's right in front of them (Burnyeat, Levett & Plato, p. 172-177, 1990). “Transcendental consciousness is a higher state of consciousness with values of self-awareness qualitatively distinct from those experienced during ordinary states of waking, sleeping, or dreaming. It is described as a deeply restful yet fully alert state of inner wakefulness with no object of thought or perception” (Tassi & Muzet, 2001, p. 11). Yoga practitioners have reached this state through deep meditation or through the last stage of yoga practice, within Savasana. It is within this state that visions, or realizations may come into the space where there are no thoughts of the mind, only pure awareness. It is energy awareness, spiritual awareness, and awareness of cosmic consciousness.

Summary

The research discussed within this literature review has highlighted what exactly creativity is and how it has been defined in the past. It reflects a spectrum of ideologies and theories based upon the creator's ultimate state. Within recent research there were studies that demonstrate that creativity can be accessed through an array of states of consciousness ranging from complete awareness to dreaming and

other unconscious states. These states of consciousness are what will be the foundation for the Introspective Course in Creativity. Exercises from the given research, from leading theorists within the field, as well as through my personal experience will be included within the course.

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to develop a handbook that draws on research and writing within creativity studies to help individuals learn how to enhance their own creativity. The handbook implemented for this project is a guidebook that covers how one can access and explore their unique creativity. The course for which the guidebook was created for can be offered at any educational setting and is for any student from any discipline. The course follows the succession of the guidebook and is meant to be offered within a traditional semester format. In this section, the major aspects of the Introspective Course in Creativity are outlined. The course's philosophy and framework will be described and information will be provided for how to teach this course at an educational institution.

Philosophy

The philosophy behind the course's framework is that each of the states that we inevitably pass through on a daily basis have the opportunity for acts of creativity to emerge (Holt, Delanoy & Roe, 2004). There is more benefit to passing through many alterations in various forms of activity than from a constant devotion to one of them (Wallas, 1926). The course was developed with this advice in mind, exposing the participants to as many creative gateways as possible. The course additionally seeks to guide students through an array of states of consciousness. In each state of consciousness, Creative Gateways have the potential for creativity to manifest.

This course's goal is to bring a deep awareness to these individual states and have students notice when any of them bring about creativity within them. Before each of the Creative Gateway exercises, the students will be asked to set an intention for their exploration. An example of this would be gaining insight on a particular project, or clarity in an aspect of life that they are currently facing. Through the reflective process, and through the Creative Gateways, students will gain insight into their own unique creative process and will be able to draw upon the skills learned to evoke a Creative State whenever it is needed.

Framework

Human Awareness and Ordinary States

During the first phase of the course, students will move through a series of exercises that will invoke an awareness of the bodily senses and the thoughts of the mind. The first portion is the 'body' and its senses where exercises that have been proven to increase creativity within bodily expressions will be explored. Awareness of the posture of the body (Hao et al. (2016), awareness of the five senses (Cross, 2018), improving circulation and free movement of the body (Oppezzo & Schwartz, 2014; Slepian & Ambady, 2012) will all be included because of their proven effects on creativity. The breath and achievement of bringing a conscious control over it, as within many yogic breathing exercises, known as pranayama, has been shown to affect states of consciousness, most notably by lowering stress levels and bringing oneself into the present moment (Brown & Gerbarg, 2009). The guidebook will prompt students to immerse themselves deeply into the sounds of nature or an

instrument or song of choice (Cross, 2018), as well as guiding deep abdominal breathing. Within the second, 'intellect' portion of the course, mindfulness and meditation exercises will be introduced. The 'stream of consciousness' writing will begin, and students embark on the inner journey through their own thought patterns, and learn ways to go beyond the everyday busy mind, into a deeper, underlying way of living. Additionally, various drawing Gateways will also be introduced within the course. Two types of meditation will be introduced: mindfulness meditation and focused attention (Colzato, Ozturk, & Hommel, 2012), both having a deep root in connecting to and enhancing creativity (Muller, Gerasimova, & Ritter, 2016; Horan, 2009; Lebuda, Zabelina, & Karwowski, 2015). During students' reflections - either verbal or written, they will be asked to formulate their own process of creativity throughout the course.

These Gateways can all be experienced through ordinary reality, and by conscious means. It has been noted by R. Sternberg, a well-known researcher within the field of creativity that the ability to switch between conventional and unconventional modes of thinking is important to the cultivation of creativity (Sternberg, 2006b). The awareness that creativity can manifest within ordinary reality and within non-ordinary reality mirrors this vital component that the Introspective Course in Creativity seeks to capture.

Cosmic Awareness and Non-Ordinary States

The second and final phase is becoming aware of the states of being that are 'non-ordinary,' in that they are an integral part of our existence, but take a lesser role

in our everyday lives. There are numerous studies that support the view that enhancement of creativity is due in part to the unconscious or non-ordinary states of being (Dijksterhuis & Meurs, 2005; Horan, 2009). States of dreaming and recalling dreams (Barrett, 2001; Piirto, 2004), mind wandering (Baird et al, 2012), and daydreaming have been included because of their proven effects on increasing creativity. The practice of keeping a daily dream log will be implemented and used, as within a study that showed its routine usage increased insight and therefore creativity (Sierra-Siegert, Jay, Flores, & Garcia, 2016).

An underlying existential philosophical tone is set during this phase and questions such as “Why am I here?” and “What is my purpose?” may rise to the surface as deeper states of consciousness are traveled through and states such as ‘imagination’ are exercised. The Creative Gateways were meant to address all states that humans naturally pass through and serve as access points from which a Creative State can be achieved. These are all natural aspects of our human nature and stem from the core of our existence. Everyone asks these existential questions at some point in their lives and they may come into fruition when these non-ordinary states coincide with our everyday lives. In addition, the realization of a unity in all things may surface and parallels the cosmic consciousness state, also known to enhance one’s creativity (Horan, 2009).

As one can see, this course is rich. It is rich in content, in experience, and in what students ultimately receive in return, which can be much more than enhancing everyday creativity.

Ongoing Assignments

The heart of the practice within the course is found within the two ongoing assignments that enhance the course's framework and are to be implemented over the duration of the course. A personal journal is to be kept and held nearby during the duration of the course. It is suggested that it is small enough to tuck into a small bag and to be free of lines so that drawings and other free forms of expression can be illustrated. It is the journal from which three ongoing assignments will be completed and a reflection of a weekly artist date. The journal has a special purpose of being a mirror into the student's internal world. It will be filled with personal reflections, experiences and doorways to be opened at a later time when creativity is needed to be called upon.

The first of the ongoing assignments is the 'stream of consciousness' writing. The assignment is to choose a time of day, the same time of the day, every day and simply write down thoughts that come, with no holding back, and no judgment. Students are to fill up a minimum of one page each day, but stop when they feel complete. This activity is acquired from J. Cameron's (2016) 'morning pages' exercise in her book, *The Artist's Way*. The way in which this exercise works is that while recording all thoughts that come into the mind, no matter the significance, eventually deeper and more substantial material will be surfaced. It is like digging and sorting through the thoughts of the mind. On a day to day basis the same thoughts are likely to appear, and for a good reason. As it is a part of functioning within this world, but by continuing this practice on a daily basis, the surface

functioning thoughts are moved out of the way and deeper revelations may become more clear.

The second purpose of the journal is to be used as a ‘creative reflection’ journal in which participants are asked to reflect on each of the Creative Gateways presented. By moving within and directly experiencing these exercises, students will have the opportunity to embody the creative state associated with them. Some exercises will be more powerful than others and by keeping a personal reflective journal nearby as they embody the state, participants will keep track of individual experiences, and have a way to work with them individually. This will be a way for participants to verify which activity or particular state was most successful for them. The self-reflective quality that the journal encourages is meant to enhance each student’s ability to organize thoughts, crystallizing understanding presenting clearer ideas of newly gained knowledge. The simple act of reflection within a written format enhances one’s learning and evolution. The first two purposes of the journal expand this quality of keeping thoughts, ideas, and experiences in order and the last purpose is for experimentation.

The journal is thirdly to be used as an ‘experiential form’ in which students can freely express anything desired. Students can of course express themselves in any way they desire, though they are encouraged to try a new form of expressing themselves. For example, if they are accustomed to writing their thoughts or ideas, they may try drawing an image of these thoughts or ideas. By trying something out of the ordinary, they are practicing one of the basic exercises of creative persons

(Piirto, 2004). The participants are encouraged to use expressions such as drawing or painting, poetry, musical expression, story-telling, bodily sequencing or any other form of recording their experiences.

The personal journal is a powerful tool. By imprinting their experiences within their journals, they will have another eye from which they are able to see their experiences, revisiting their unique Creative State, providing ongoing inspirational material. Reflective journals are very significant devices that facilitate the extraction of meaning from experiences (Boud, 2001). The student will have their journals forever, providing ongoing access to their inner world obtained during the short duration of the semester-long course.

An additional weekly ongoing assignment will be the creative date; essentially 'going on a date' with yourself. For this assignment, the student is to do something creative, or go somewhere that would spark inspiration. The guiding advice for the instructor to give would be to follow their interest. It can be something or somewhere that they truly enjoy and find excitement in doing, perhaps something that they put off to the side because of a lack in time, or somewhere they have always wanted to go or experience. This assignment opens the opportunity to explore the inner desire as they can create or do anything they wish. It may manifest as a simple drawing, a poem or exploration of a new kind of medium or it can be physically going somewhere; they can visit an art museum and bring a journal with them writing about their experience. Giving the student freedom to choose the direction and content of a project keeps inspiration flowing and creativity strong (Troop, 2017). Inspiration is an

essential aspect of yielding creativity (Wallas, 1980). We are all uniquely inspired by various things within the world, and this is the time to notice and let it do the guiding. When students meet, they have the opportunity to share this with each other and be inspired by one another's work (Piiro, 2004) as well.

Summary

The ongoing assignments will serve as a staple from which all other forms of creative work evolve and will be a part of the daily practice that is likely to carry on after the course is completed. The reflective journal students keep can provide a fertile ground from which their seeds of creativity may flourish. As the course progresses through a series of states of awareness, ranging from a bodily awareness to a cosmic awareness, as well as a thoughtful introduction of corresponding Creative Gateways, the participants have the opportunity to dive into them, evoking what each Gateway may have in store for accessing their inner creativity. The metacognitive framework provides the substance from which students can later reflect upon and access what worked for them on an individual basis. As the students reflect, explore and record their unique experiences, they concurrently gain insights into their current life projects and individual situations. The journals and ongoing activities can provide infinite access points into the individual Creative State. This is what makes this course unique, that it is framed and guided in a very methodical way, but there is an immense amount of potential that lies at each Creative Gateway and Creative State experienced.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

This college-level professional course emphasizes individual investigation, observation, and contemplation where students can have an intimate relationship with their own internal states of awareness, bringing them back to the core of their existence and source of creativity. This course was developed so that it could be offered to any student within any educational setting, with no prerequisites needed. There is value in implementing it into an undergraduate core curriculum, however, as the student will have the opportunity to carry these valuable skills learned during the Introspective Course in Creativity throughout her professional studies. The possibility of teaching this course within a Creativity Center, either within a university or a brick-and-mortar is also a possibility.

Setting and Flow

The desired classroom setting would be within an art classroom, though any classroom would work. The value in having the course within an art classroom would be more openness, more natural lighting, and access to easels and other art materials. The course will have an introduction period, where the students share a little about who they are and what they would like to get out of the course. Upon the next meeting, the course would start with the introduction of the Creative Gateways, and every meeting time thereafter would follow a similar format, introducing a new Creative Gateway each segment to give the students a chance to implement it into

their lives if appropriate. The Human Awareness and Ordinary States are introduced first, and then various Cosmic Consciousness and Non-Ordinary States will be presented and explored with the corresponding Creative Gateways. The Creative Gateways interwoven throughout the course will be varied and have sources from previous research within the field of creativity, from experts within the field, as well from my personal experience in working in and between these various states. Each of the Gateways have an equal opportunity to manifest creativity. The Creative State will be explained and explored and students will be prompted to record each of their experiences thoroughly within their journals. At the end of the course, students will have an abundance of information available to them as to how to enter their personal Creative State along with personal growth and revelations learned and processed in and through the course. This course is not only a course in creativity enhancement, it is a deep, reflective practice that nourishes self-growth and personal investigation and is valuable at many levels to the participants.

If the course is taught within a higher educational institution, it can be taught within a traditional 15-week semester time frame, meeting one class time a week for 2 hours with additional time spent working on self-reflections and projects outside of class. It can be a part of a core curriculum. The guidebook works along the same timeframe as a typical semester course would. The introductions are given first, and then the Creative Gateways can be introduced weekly, one at a time. The ongoing assignments are to be completed by the student on a daily or weekly time frame. The purpose of having the given timeframe to work on this course is that students need to

spend the time within each of the activities, and incorporating awareness into their daily activities during the length of the course.

Another advantage of having this course offered within a typical semester time frame is that students will be able to take this together, and have the opportunity to share with their peers, which often stimulates the creative process.

Having a teacher who is familiar and knowledgeable within the areas of the course would be optimal, though someone who has passion for seeing creativity arise out of individuals and has experience within the various Creative Gateways would serve wonderfully. Instructors can also be trained to teach this course. Having someone who has already taken it would be ideal.

Desired Impact

It is a paramount obsession within creativity researchers to explain the cognitive change that occurs in an idea transformation from inspiration to a finished product (Gabora, 2002). Though we may never truly pinpoint how it is that creative ideas manifest, we can directly experience the change, and learn from it. In this way knowledge becomes wisdom. This is the foundation from which this course was created and continues to be the driving motivation behind its own potential. The outcome for this course is to bring a deeper awareness of consciousness to students taking the course, from which students acquire real wisdom that they are able to utilize over their entire lives. The introspective nature of this course prompts the students to look within to find their uniqueness and the talents they have brought to the world. It nourishes self-growth and personal investigation and is valuable at

many levels to the participants. With the introduction of such a course during the college years, the impact can be limitless as students really learn to maneuver in their own direct experiences. They can be empowered to access their own creativity and utilize it within their chosen fields and personal lives. With the given framework of the course, students are encouraged to not only express creativity, but to remember where and how they accessed that creativity. The specific Creative Gateways introduced are the staples from which the Creative State can be entered, though each person can enter in their own way. This course encourages one to explore how they can enter their own Creative State to authentically express who they are. This course simply opens up an awareness in which learning and transformation occurs within the student. An everlasting change occurs, and once this happens, it only feeds further motivation and development, utilizing these essential tools for life. Another imperative desired impact is to begin to push back against the current statistics in that only one in four individuals describe themselves as creative (Adobe, 2016). I hope by implementing this course into colleges across the country, will help shift the current perceptions and bring attention to the need for such a course within the educational system. The notion that we are all creative and have something unique and special to bring to the world and are able to call upon these abilities when needed to enhance life is an important and crucial aspect to life itself. We are all here for a reason and creativity is the key to unlocking our purpose and living within our ultimate potential. This course has the potential to be implemented into every university as a part of the core curriculum, or as an elective course. Its content is invaluable for students and

the skills they learn will be with them within any profession they choose, ultimately heightening their creativity and infusing it into their given areas of work.

Furthermore, the skills they learn within the course will be with them as well as be passed down to their children who can practice becoming authentic creative generations of the future.

It is with years of guiding courses in a similar manner that I have full trust and knowledge that this course will be successful for those who put the time and effort into its philosophy and inner workings. With the given research and time dedicated to this project, I am further trusting in its power and its potential impact.

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the handbook is to create a concrete guide from which one can successfully carry out a college-level course in Creativity. The Introspective Course in Creativity is a unique course that will naturally bring about authenticity with deep, reflective practices. As illustrated earlier within this paper, creativity is very much woven into our everyday existence and its expression can take many forms. Like the many forms that creativity can be manifested in, it can also be accessed in numerable, unique ways. The Introspective Course in Creativity teaches just this, giving the student an opportunity to discover where their unique creativity comes from and how they can access it whenever it is needed. This chapter outlines recommendations for how this handbook could be shared and Introspective Course in Creativity can be carried out within the world, as well as providing a summary for this master project.

Recommendations

Though it is the intention for this paper to justify the importance of having such a creativity course accessible for students within higher education institutions, it has many other possible applications. The handbook itself has a multifaceted use, however, in that it can be utilized as a part of any creativity training. It has the flexibility and durability to be used as a college level course in creativity, of course, or it can serve as a module for a creativity piece within courses in education, art,

business or philosophy. Even outside of the educational system, within community Creativity centers, workshops, and retreats for businesses, professionals or entrepreneurs, this course can have a significant presence. The handbook shares many valuable skills that any person, from any background can benefit from.

Summary

Creativity is at the core of human existence, and the ability to express it transcends health and wellbeing. Within higher educational settings, there is a fertile ground from which students have the ability to learn an array of life and professional skills. Creativity courses are necessary in order for this valuable skill to be appropriately learned by future generations, and they can be easily adaptable to fit an array of educational situations. With more complicated ways of living and enormous unknowns approaching the world, creativity training is a very necessary and urgent ingredient to cultivating an abundantly flourishing world.

The Introspective Course in Creativity was formulated to accommodate any student, from any discipline and has the ability to adapt to an array of learning situations. Within the metacognitive framework, students learn how they become creative by exploring various Creative Gateways. Their cognitive reflective activity is what they will be able to draw from to nourish and express their creativity as they move forward.

Creativity affects us on a global as well as at an individual level. By having the ability to accurately express ourselves creatively, we can reveal our innermost aspect of who we are and be able to live fully within our ultimate human potential.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A
INTROSPECTIVE COURSE IN CREATIVITY

Introspective Course in Creativity
By Gabrielle Luo

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Introduction

This course is a journey, a path to your inner self. It will reveal ways for you to access your unique creativity and give you a set of tools that you can later use to bring you into your own creative state. We all experience creativity in various ways and have a unique connection and expression of what it means to be creative. Creativity is a trainable skill that brings a plethora of benefits to our health and wellbeing, our cognitive thought, and can help access insight to some of our deepest questions on fulfilling our lives. This course will introduce many access points that you will be able to attain a creative state and manifest what you desire.

Creativity reaches beyond and through the disciplines of psychology, philosophy, art, the sciences, and education. There is a fascination with the source, functioning and purpose of this uniquely human trait. “Creativity is not separate from intelligence or artistry, but a part of the whole” (Piirto, 2004). It is what unifies us and what defines our individuality.

The Introspective Course in Creativity will help you on your path to your inner self. The handbook provided is to accompany you along your journey. It will reinforce what is introduced and provide some additional information or elaborate on a particular topic. The course is a workshop-based training that involves hands-on, direct experience with exercises and activities that correspond to the material introduced. You will practice these activities within the course as well as within your own time. The more these practices are integrated into everyday life, the more they have potential to enliven creativity and help you become more aware of its sources.

This course is for any person interested in learning how they can become creative individuals. Organizations, professionals, teachers, students, parents or anyone wanting to unlock their inner creativity can take this course and benefit from its multi-dimensional approach to sparking the inner creative fire.

Living within Potential

This course is more than a course in creativity enhancement. Through the introspective nature of its framework and philosophy, students have the opportunity to tap into and to experience a vast array of states that may have been previously only lightly grazed upon within everyday life. By fully embodying each state cultivated within each exercise, students have the opportunity to explore new aspects of themselves and may naturally bring about new experiences, insights and reflections on everyday life.

This course has the potential to to open up limitless pathways of knowing our true self. Connecting to this authenticity of who we are and being able to freely express it in a way that is fulfilling and satisfying is a part of living life within our fullest potential. These explored states are each gateways, or pathways, to our inner world, to our authentic self. Each will have the potential to manifest creativity in their own way and will be unique to the individual.

By approaching individual creativity as a means of discovering our purpose and expressing our unique gifts with the world, this course offers a unique and very valuable asset to our lives.

Live completely alive, every day. Fill our lives with meaningful inspiration and insights to fulfill our life's goals and purpose.

“To be creative means to be in love with life. You can be creative only if you love life enough that you want to enhance its beauty, you want to bring a little more music to it, a little more poetry to it, a little more dance to it.”

— **Osho**

Philosophy & Framework

"Creativity is not just for artists. It's for businesspeople looking for a new way to close a sale; it's for engineers trying to solve a problem; it's for parents who want their children to see the world in more than one way."--*Twyla Tharp*

The fact is that creativity is for everyone, it is what ultimately makes us human and able to live deeply satisfying lives. Humans have thrived on this planet because of their inherent use of creativity. We continue to utilize this valuable asset as we move through increasingly complicated ways of living. Creativity not only helps us solve everyday problems and make connections, it is a way of expressing our individuality. Modern theorists view creativity as an ability, as a process, or as an experience that connects to one's authenticity (e.g. Piirto, 2004, Sternberg, 2006). We have the potential to connect to this authenticity within every aspect of our lives. Therefore, I have given creativity the following definition:

Creativity is a continuous, permanent and transcendent way of living and creating the self from the self, a giving of form to the experience of your inner self. It is an introspective process and state of living that naturally births original ideas, unique insights, and valuable, self-satisfying everyday decisions.

Within this course you will learn how to return to your inner self, authentically being able to express your uniqueness. We are all born with unique, innate interests and abilities. It is our job to discover what those are and to enhance them in a way that will enable us to make significant contributions to our world.

You will learn how to return to this authentic self through a series of creative gateways:

Creative Gateways are activities and exercises that promote a creative state. They connect the person experiencing them with their true, inner self.

These are essentially a set of exercises and activities that have been proven to increase creativity. They have been utilized by artists, musicians, philosophers, business entrepreneurs, and mothers. They consist of timeless techniques that can be easily practiced by anyone, regardless of prior experience or knowledge within creativity itself. There are also many kinds of these exercises and work on the individual in various ways, though the result is the same, creativity.

Creative State is an ordered state of being that occurs when there is more fluent free association; increased ability to play spontaneously with hypotheses, metaphors, paradoxes, transformations or relationships; heightened ability for visual imagery and fantasy; capacity to restructure problems in a larger context; heightened sensory inputs; heightened aesthetic sensibility; and having subconscious data more accessible (Fadiman, 2011).

It can also be characterized by M. Csikszentmihalyi's concept of *flow*, where the individual experiences an "in the zone" experience characterized by meeting the personal needs of the individual; it is effortless, relaxed and a fully present state of being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The Creative State is unique to the individual experiencing it, though is at its peak when associations can be freely made between states of consciousness. Similarly, as within Csikszentmihalyi's concept of *flow*, being completely focused on the activity at hand, coupled with a lost sense of time, and having no sense of ego (1990), mirrors the free flowing capability to connect the various states of consciousness.

A person may know they have reached a creative state when they have a sense of calmness and ease. They will be completely engrossed within their activity and have an altered sense of time. It is a state that is satisfying and fulfilling. It may bring about new ideas or personal revelations, commonly known as aha moments. Aspects of your life may all come together in harmony and profound insights may present themselves. You will know when you have reached this state.

Because this creative state has the ability to manifest itself in a variety of ways and within many states of consciousness that we naturally pass in and through on a daily basis, the course will do this as well. Perhaps we have been on a nature walk or a particular insight from a dream we had the night before, these are examples of the states of consciousness that creativity comes through.

The Creative Gateways each exist within various states of consciousness. The course will gradually move from more bodily, familiar, and ordinary states, as in the *human awareness* portion, to focusing on more non-ordinary, unconscious ways in which creativity can become manifest, as in the *cosmic consciousness* exercises.

Human Awareness "Usually, these mental states are accessible to consciousness, in that people are generally aware of what they are thinking, what they want and feel, and what they are doing" (Kihlstrom, 2013, p. 1). We are able to experience directly our body and intellect within everyday consciousness and are a part of our ordinary reality.

Cosmic Consciousness A neurophysiologic state of consciousness from which creativity may originate from that does not belong to the 'human awareness' states. These may include: dreams, imagination, and visions.

There are a few of Creative Gateways within each of the states explored. By witnessing, embodying and reflecting upon each of the Creative Gateways, you will gain insight as to where you receive inspiration from and have access to the Creative State associated with them. For example, if you find that the breath and the breathing exercises introduced guides you to a Creative State more readily than the others, then

you will have the tools readily available to guide you back to your Creative State. The tools learned coupled with your past experiences from which you have documented along with course will be valuable information that only you can provide.

As the course progresses through the series of exercises, pay attention to the particular state you are in. Do so in a way that is as fully present with it as possible. By recording as much as you can within your journal along the course, you will be more likely to return to that specific state that allows you to let creativity flow again. Give each exercise your deepest attention and commitment. It may be the means by which you have a profound revelation!

The course itself is characterized by a metacognitive approach, essentially reflecting upon experiences, and learning from our own reflections. The goal of this course is to find which creative gateway(s) conveys a personal state of inner creativity that is individually recognized. When the course is completed, you will have a plethora of tools that you can call upon to help bring you into your creative state, and authentically express yourself.

Creativity is our uniqueness, and when we are able to express it in a free way, we access our true self. Experience each of the exercises presented in a way that makes sense for you. They are only guidance along the inner journey you will ultimately embark on. Each exercise is only a suggestion and a means by which someone else has been able to be creative, though we are all very unique and will naturally experience our reality in slightly different ways.

Let this course serve as an invitation to knowing oneself on a level never known before. There is always something to be learned, something to inspire, and to lead one on a path of inner knowing and trust. We can read all we want about what increases creativity or instructions on how to access this inner place, though once we have inwardly perceived it is true, we can claim it as *our* experience.

The course will also have several ongoing assignments that are meant to give you an additional reflection as you embark on this journey. They will provide you with a deeper understanding of how you feel within each of the exercises and help you to return to them when you need them.

Ongoing Assignments

The heart of the practice within the course is found within a personal journal from which you will keep all personal reflections. It will contain ongoing assignments that enhance the course's framework and are to be implemented over the duration of the course. The ongoing assignments introduced here are for your own success in determining how you individually can cultivate a state of creativity and by providing you with an illustration of your personal experience. As you are guided along the

various states of consciousness and move through the different Creative Gateways your personal journal will be right at your side. It is suggested that it is small enough to tuck into a small bag and to be free of lines so that drawings and other free forms of expression can be illustrated. It is the journal from which three ongoing assignments will be completed in and a reflection of a weekly artist date. The journal has a special purpose of being a mirror into the student's internal world. It will be filled with personal reflections, experiences and doorways to be opened at a later time when creativity is needed to be called upon.

Purposes of the Journal:

1. The first of the ongoing assignments is the, 'stream of consciousness' writing. The assignment is to choose a time of day, the same time of the day, every day and simply write down thoughts that come, with no holding back, and no judgment. Filling up a minimum of one page each day, but stopping when feeling complete. This activity is acquired from Cameron's (2016) 'morning pages' exercise in her book, *The Artist's Way* and is introduced within the course during the *mind* portion. The way in which this exercise works is that while recording all thoughts that come into the mind, no matter the significance, eventually deeper and more substantial material will be surfaces. It is kind of like digging within the thoughts of the mind. On a day to day basis the same thoughts are likely to appear, and for a good reason. As it is a part of functioning within this world, but by continuing this practice on a daily basis, the surface functioning thoughts are moved out of the way and deeper revelations may become more clear.
2. The second purpose of the journal is to be used as a 'creative reflection' journal in which you will be prompted to reflect on each of the Creative Gateways presented during or directly after the exercise. By moving within and directly experiencing these Gateways, you will have the opportunity to embody the creative state associated with them. Some of them may be more powerful than others and by keeping a personal reflective journal nearby as you embody the state, you can keep track of individual experiences, and have a way to work with them individually. This will additionally be a way for you to verify which activity or particular state was most successful for you. The self-reflective quality that the journal encourages is meant to enhance your ability to organize thoughts, crystallizing understanding presenting clearer ideas of newly gained knowledge. The simple act of reflection within a written format enhances one's learning and evolution. Furthermore, throughout the course you will be encouraged to try different modes of expressing yourself. For example, if you are more likely to try and write down your experiences, perhaps trying to draw or to write some lyrics down in a poetic fashion may stimulate more connections to be made within this inner work.

The first two purposes of the journal expand this quality of keeping thoughts, ideas, and experiences in order and the last purpose is for experimentation.

3. The journal is thirdly to be used as an ‘experiential form’ that can be used to freely express anything desired. You can of course express in any way you desire, though are encouraged to try a new form of expressing yourself that is new. For example, if you are accustomed to writing thoughts or ideas, you may try drawing an image of these thoughts or ideas. By trying something out of the ordinary, you are practicing one of the basic exercises of creative persons (Piirto, 2004).

The personal journal is a powerful tool. By imprinting your experiences within your journals, you will have another eye from which you are able to see your personal experiences from, providing ongoing inspirational material. Reflective journals are very significant devices that facilitate the extraction of meaning from experiences (Boud, 2001). You will have your journals to keep with you forever, providing lasting access to their inner world obtained during the short duration of the course.

An additional ongoing assignment will be the creative date which will be done weekly; essentially ‘going on a date’ with yourself. For this assignment, do something creative, or go somewhere that would spark inspiration. Follow your interest. It can be something or somewhere that you truly enjoy and find excitement in doing, perhaps something that you put off to the side because of a lack in time, or somewhere you have always wanted to go or experience. This assignment opens the opportunity to explore as you can create or do anything you wish. It may manifest as a simple drawing, a poem or exploration of a new kind of medium or it can be physically going somewhere; you can visit an art museum and bring a journal with you, writing about the experience. You have the freedom to choose the direction and content this project which in turn keeps inspiration flowing and creativity strong (Troop, 2017). Following inspiration and letting it show us where to go can be a powerful driving force in a creative life. Inspiration is an essential aspect of yielding creativity (Wallas, 1926). We are all uniquely inspired by various things within the world, and this is the time to notice and let it do the guiding. When students meet, they have the opportunity to share this with each other and be inspired by one another’s work as well.

As you may notice, these ongoing practices can provide a plethora of inspirational material that can help facilitate and expand the content of the course. By actively reflecting on each of these activities as well as on your overall progress and growth within this course, you will start to unravel your creative process and gain insight into how it is you can access to your creative state.

Human Awareness and Ordinary States

By cultivating awareness and directly experiencing the body and the mind, we can learn a lot about ourselves and the world around us. We will begin the courses Creative Gateways here, as it is where most of our attention is focused on a daily basis. These ordinary, conscious states of being are the “mental states that are accessible to consciousness, in that people are generally aware of what they are thinking, what they want and feel, and what they are doing” (Kihlstrom, 2013).

The Body

Our body is the most direct way in which we experience our world. Humans are naturally aware of their body and its capabilities. The five senses of the body, sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing are all experienced through this Gateway. Furthermore, our unique body gives rise to unique experiences through the five senses. It is through the senses that we experience our world, giving rise to sensations, naturally inspiring creativity (Cross, 2018). It is by utilizing the physical senses of the body that we can achieve a deeper level of awareness. Feeling the body, moving our bodies, listening to the sounds of nature, tasting our foods, all of these are a part of an enriching life experience that calls out for creative expression to manifest.

In the words of philosopher, Merleau-Ponty “the artist takes his body with him” and “it is by the lending of his body to the world that the artist changes the world into his paintings” (1964, p. 2). It is within the body that the intertwining of vision and movement occur. It is where we experience the world and how we ultimately express our individual experiences. The exploration of the body and its senses to experience the world is the first of the Creative Gateways that will be opened and explored.

The Breath

The breath is the first part of the body and a keystone experience of our lives that will be explored first. The breath is said to be a direct mirror of our inner world. We literally ‘breathe in’ our world, and ‘breathe out’ what we no longer need inside of us. We can learn a lot about our lives and our particular state from observing the breath. The breath not only reflects our inner world, but also provides a way from which we can shift our mental and energetic state.

Belly/diaphragmatic breathing:

Yogic breathing, also known as pranayama is a unique method for balancing the autonomic nervous system (Brown & Gerbarg, 2005). “Prana” translates as “life force” or “energy.” This ancient science of breath is called pranayama, meaning both “control of energy” and “expansion of energy.” Yogic breathing or pranayama can rapidly bring the mind into the present moment and reduce stress.

The practice of belly/diaphragmatic breathing has been used for centuries by yogis as a way to live and enter meditation and is a fundamental exercise that will be

introduced as a possible gateway to enter a creative state. From lowering stress levels, alleviating anxiety, increasing oxygen to the body, and better posture, this time-honored way of breathing utilizes the diaphragm, or the “breathing muscle” as its main muscle and lessens unneeded work by secondary breathing muscles (pectoralis and trapezius, the chest and neck) that are too often put to work in states of prolonged stress. This way of breathing utilizes the most natural way to breathe within the body

For this exercise proper alignment of the spine is essential, as it will allow for the most oxygen to reach your cells. Take a sitting posture, legs comfortably crossed, and elevate your hips above your knees with a pillow. The spine lengthens and chest is open. Relax the shoulders away from the ears. Rest your hands on your thighs and breathe normally for a few breaths.

Now, as you inhale, expand the belly, exhale and relax and let the belly button come back in toward the spine. Take a few breaths like this, gradually deepening the breath. When you inhale fully, feel your belly expand, your rib cage flare out, and your clavicles (shoulders) slightly rise, within that order. You may feel the energy from your breath rise into your head. You may take a moment here to pause. As you slowly and rhythmically exhale, do so from the top down, head, shoulders, then rib cage, and belly draws back inward. You may feel the energy sink into the ground from which you are sitting upon. Continue this exercise for about 15 minutes or for as long as you are able to do so. This exercise can be done with the eyes open or closed. Let this be as physical or energetic as you like. Guide the breath in and through the body. Inhale new, fresh oxygen, and exhale out old, stale energy.

Take a few moments after this exercise to reflect, writing any thoughts about how this was for you or anything that may have come up in your thoughts that you would like to note on. By practicing this exercise 15 minutes a day, you can start to adapt this type of breathing so it becomes more of a habitual way of breathing.

Music and Sound

It has been said that the universe was created with a sound. All of life creates some kind of sound, and humans have the ability to make wonderful music. This exercise is to celebrate and immerse yourself into music or sound that you are drawn to explore. It is a very different experience reading a description of a symphony, or multi-tasking during one than fully immersing yourself within the sound itself. For this Gateway, listen to a song, preferably live music, and really listen with your whole body. If you feel inspired to create music yourself, fully immerse yourself in the act of making sound with your body. You can play an instrument or sing. Even if you are not accustomed in doing so, experiment with your vocal chords and feel the resonance that travels through your throat. Immerse your experience into listening and tune into how your body responds. Where do you feel the notes vibrate? What

emotions come up? Be sure to write about your experience or draw something within your journal as this may be more appropriate as music sometimes creates no thought, just pure sensation.

You can experiment by playing different instruments, or attending various kinds of musical performances. Try going to an opera, or a jazz concert. Bring along your journal and write, doodle, any experience you like. Later you can reflect upon it by looking at your marks and remembering what it was like.

Movement

It has been shown that by generating fluid movement within the body, fluidity transfers into the mind in enhancing creative thoughts (Slepian & Ambady, 2012). For this Gateway, take about 10 minutes to freely explore the movement of your body. You can play some music, or be in nature and flow and move alongside a river or at the ocean. Water can provide great inspiration for this Gateway because of its natural fluidity. Without judgement or any specific requirement, just move your body in any way you wish, go with the flow. Use your limbs, sway your hips, roll your neck, look around with your eyes, wiggle your toes, anything you feel. Enjoy this state for as long as you desire. Be sure to record if you particularly enjoyed anything, or if any thoughts or inspirations came to you while doing this exercise.

You can repeat this exercise at various times per day and note when your body enjoys this kind of free movement. Pay attention to the kind of head space you have, what thoughts come, or creative thoughts weave themselves in.

Nature Walk

Oh the miracle of nature! It has been said that Beethoven's inspiration came from his morning walk he took through a forest in which he would record the first tune that came into his head. Likewise, both Kant and Schopenhauer took daily walks as a kind of spiritual practice.

For this exercise, go to the most natural place you have access to and just walk. This is not only for exercise and to get the blood moving, but to fill your body and senses with a rich atmosphere that has potential to have limitless inspiration. Ideally, to do this exercise at the same time every day would prompt your body that it is now time to relax and to reflect. Witness the changing seasons, breathing fresh air and scents of the natural world. Things shift and change all the time in nature, by going with the flow of the day, use what the Earth has already provided for us to enhance your inner creativity.

While you are walking, pay attention to how your body feels. What sounds do you hear, what do you see? Simply let this experience be enjoyable and easy, as it should be! Bring along your journal, as you may find it hands to stop and jot down a few

ideas or reflections that come, and then continue walking. Try walking at different times during your day and find a time that is most enjoyable. Going for an easy stroll after a meal is known to improve digestion, you may start there. The easy movement stimulates a natural, rhythmic flow as you walk with each step. Our bodies were made to walk; it is no wonder this exercise would be included to return to our true essence.

Intellect

“We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world.” -Buddha

Still within the realm of *human awareness* is that of the mind and its intellectual thought. For the next set of Creative Gateways we will shift our awareness to the mind and its thoughts, perceptions, and patterns. It is within the mind that it is believed we come up with new authentic ideas (Sternberg, 2006). And it is a paramount obsession within creativity researchers to explain the cognitive change that occurs in an idea transformation from inspiration to a finished product (Gabora, 2002). Though we may never truly pinpoint how it is creative ideas manifest, what we can do is directly experience it, and learn from that direct experience. In this way knowledge becomes wisdom.

Every day we have millions of thoughts, and by tuning into them in an insightful way, perhaps we can learn more about ourselves than we have ever acknowledged before. They may bring about deeper layers within ourselves that need to be explored or inspire us to learn something more. Furthermore, various meditation techniques will be introduced. These practices are used to guide the thoughts of the mind so they don't become taxing, but are only called upon when needed. Mindfulness will naturally arise, and connecting to a part of yourself that is more in harmony with your inner self.

Stream of Consciousness

Our everyday thinking mind may have a lot to say about ourselves and the world around us. Do you take the time to really listen or to acknowledge your recurring thoughts? This next exercise is one that will cultivate awareness to your thoughts in a way that may bring new insight into what you think about and why.

From Cameron's book, *The Artist's Way*, this exercise is called 'the morning pages,' but it will be referred to 'Stream of Consciousness,' because of its ability to reflect your thoughts within a stream of words. It is to be done every day, preferably in the morning, but anytime, the same time every day is best. The idea is to fill roughly three pages with your Stream of Consciousness thoughts. Leave nothing out, and do not worry about what comes onto the paper, even if it is not in complete sentences. Just record what you think, word for word.

The way in which this exercise works is that while recording all thoughts that come into the mind, no matter the significance, eventually deeper and more substantial material will be surfaced. It is like organizing thoughts of the mind. On a day to day basis the same thoughts are likely to appear, and for a good reason. As it is a part of functioning within this world, but by continuing this practice on a daily basis, the surface functioning thoughts are moved out of the way and deeper revelations may become more clear.

Mind Mapping

A similar exercise to the Stream of Consciousness, is mind mapping. With mind mapping, however, you are able to organize your thoughts in a pictorial view, making connections between the patterns of thought within your mind. In this way, new insights and relationships may present themselves that were previously hidden. Start with a concept or idea that you want to develop or explore. Draw a circle or picture around it, continue writing key words that connect or add a different dimension to the main idea. Write lines to connect ideas and make associations between them. You can print words, draw pictures, use colors, codes or anything you like to make it come to life. This can be a very fun and rewarding exercise especially if you feel stuck or out of inspiration on a particular idea. Be sure to remember to write a reflection on this exercise in your journal, adding what you would like to evolve from this exercise or any ideas or themes to further explore.

Drawing Exercises

There are numerous drawing exercises that can be done to enhance creativity. The two introduced here are different in that one is focusing your attention on the external world around you and one is focusing your attention on your internal world. You do not have to be an artist to exercise this part of mind body connection.

Sketching:

A drawing practice that is extremely rewarding is to simply take your journal or unlined notebook, and sketch anything in your life you find interesting. Sketching cultivates a mind relationship we have with our outside world. In sketching, you use a series of light and short lines and follow your eyes around the shape of an object or scene. Gradually get darker with your lines when you feel committed to the shape of the object. You can darken shadier areas, and keep the lighter areas the white of the paper or use chalk to lighten them if you are using toned paper. Like most of these activities, the more you practice them, the more you will get better and perhaps find that they lead to a great internal source of inspiration. Various mediums can also be explored as there are limitless ways of layering and portraying what you see. The reflection for this Gateway can be portrayed as the sketch itself, or if you desire to reflect in words next to the sketch.

Make your drawings fun, and keep them simple at first. Let your interest guide you, and explore different scenarios to sketch. You may explore your house, your family, nature, everyday interactions or objects. You may learn something new about what you are drawing or want to explore it more in a deeper way.

Free Drawing:

This Creative Gateway is similar to the Stream of Consciousness exercise, but instead of reflecting upon your thoughts, we focus on our internal perceptions. Have a blank piece of paper and a drawing utensil ready. Just let your hand move across your paper, letting the lines flow and overlap. No thought or plan is needed, just let anything come, and practice this for as long as desired.

Perhaps the inspirational aspect of this Gateway comes within the reflection that takes place after. By writing down your thoughts associated with this exercise, a new layer of meaning may come forth. Repeat this whenever you feel necessary.

Meditation

Meditation is a doorway between our inner and outer worlds, between “reality” (the seemingly solid world that we can see, hear, smell, taste and touch) and an intangible “underlying stillness” we sense beneath, between and beyond what those five senses can grasp. It is a way of cultivating harmony between these outer and inner worlds and seeing connections that perhaps were too opaque to make out.

By consciously quieting the chatter of our surface mind, we claim our authentic and essential self—the indefinable essence that makes us unique. As we relate more to our authentic self and are able to more readily identify it when it presents itself, we gain more trust and ease in expressing it on an everyday basis.

The mind has been represented within this popular analogy: Imagine the mind as a large lake, the thoughts of the mind are like ripples and clutter the clarity of the lake. The more we can smooth the thoughts of the mind, the more we are able to see the clarity that lies deep within the lake.

Meditation allows us to tap the deeper, wiser dimensions of our minds, which tend to only speak in whispers. We may not make space to listen.

Essentially meditation *is* focus, and the more we can cultivate in our minds, the more they are able to concentrate on a given outcome, i.e., Creativity.

Focused Meditation:

For this exercise read the following guided meditation:

Come to a comfortable seated position. Elongate the spine and elevate the hips above the knees, comfortably placing the legs with enough space for blood to flow through. Rest the hands, palm down on your thighs. Close your eyes and begin with a few moments of deep abdominal breaths. Now bring your awareness to your heart. Feel it beating, gently pulsating beneath your skin, nourishing your body with life. Notice

each pulsation and the compassion that lies deep within. Try to focus deeper and deeper on the space of the heart and its energy. If you notice your attention drifting, simply bring your awareness back to your heart and listen again for the beating of the heart.

Do this for 3 minutes to start out and continue to practice focused attention daily, working up to 15 or 20 minutes daily. You can also draw your attention to something else, your breath or the space between your eyes, known as your ‘third eye.’ Another valuable focus is on a piece of art. Take in the elements of the work, line, color, movement, feel the sensations within the body and energy of your thoughts while in the meditation.

Mindfulness Meditation:

Mindfulness meditation is an extension to focused attention, without a direct concentration on a specific thing, such as your breath. Within mindfulness attention the idea is to clear out the thoughts of the mind. Creating space and interconnectedness as well as a deep awareness of the here and now are what you aim to generate. If thoughts begin to arise, acknowledge them and let them pass, as you cultivate more space and openness between the thoughts. As you sift through the layers of thoughts, emotions, judgments, and mind chatter you are left with the enormity of the moment and with a more regular practice, a deep sense of clarity concerning our existence.

As with any meditation practice, the more regularly practiced, the more the benefits will be noticed and incorporated into your life.

Yoga

We now come to the practice of yoga, which is in itself the ‘union’ of the body and mind. It is essentially the practice of a moving meditation. The breath and movement are in sync with one another and, within this synchronicity, harmony and balance are cultivated within your physical body, mind, and unconscious. There are many kinds of yoga, but for the beginner a gentle hatha or vinyassa will be a good introduction to capture the essence of the practice. There are also numerous videos on yoga and guided yoga practices. For this portion of the course, try a yoga class or guided online class for at least an hour a week for the remainder of the course. Be sure to bring along your journal and write down any reflections or inspirations that come, particularly in the moments directly following the yoga class. For it is the original purpose of yoga to come into a meditative state.

Cosmic Consciousness & Non-Ordinary States

Great musicians claim that their art comes to life in the spaces in-between notes. Sudden insights, visions, dreams and aha moments are paramount in describing the

creative process. It is within these spaces that perceptions, ideas and feelings incubate and are ultimately brought to the surface.

“I can’t force inspiration. Ideas just come to me when I’m not seeking them—when I’m swimming or running or standing in the shower.” “It happens like magic.” “I can just see things that other people can’t, and I don’t know why.” “The muse just sits on my shoulder.” “If I concentrate on finding the answer it never comes, but if I let my mind just wander, the answer pops in.” (Andreasen, 2005.)

This portion of the course will be dedicated to focusing on those states of consciousness that we may not be consciously aware of, appearing to exist underneath the ordinary states that we are familiar with. It is because these non-ordinary states of being are typically only reflected upon during the ordinary states and only when we bring more awareness to them, they may begin to speak to us.

As within the first portion of the course, continue to use your journal to log your experiences, though pay more particular attention to insights received in other forms such as metaphors and symbols. Experiment with other styles of recording your experiences and be open to other forms of inspiration that may come. A reminder to you is that this course is for you, and for you to gain a deeper understanding of who you are within this world and how you can share this uniqueness in the form of your creativity with others.

When we become aware that we are like a drop of water in a vast, divine ocean, yet distinct and immersed in something much larger than ourselves we enter this state of cosmic consciousness. The realization of a unity in all things parallels the cosmic consciousness state and is also connected to enhancing one’s creativity (Horan, 2009). This state is experienced uniquely and may vary in subsequent occurrences. We may download a lot of information or insights at once, or be completely empty at the same time. We may feel completely expansive and at one with all of existence, and have no feelings or desires. The perfection within the present moment is a wonder, because it is all we really have, this moment. When we transcend our everyday reality into this state, it is hard for our senses and mind to comprehend. Essentially the mind and body become non-existent and there is little interaction among them and this is the reason why these states may be associated with “non-ordinary” reality. Therefore, when we have come to this state, the thinking analytical mind may not be present and awareness of this state is only captured after it presents to us. When we reflect upon this state, it is within the reflection that the insights appear and we are able to make sense of them. It is the same within dreams. We may not be aware of the dream, while dreaming, but remember and reflect when we are in a waking, ordinary. Concurrently, the insights, peace and transcendence felt within this state may be all there is, and simply having the experience of that is enough, complete and perfect on its own.

Dreams

Most of us dream every night, or we may think we do not but in fact the hours of our 'sleeping' are filled with mental activity. By keeping a dream log, as this exercise will describe, you will become more aware of your dreams and insights into your unconscious thought process. There are two thought processes as to why dreams provide one with creativity. One is that by paying attention to one's dreams one can actually stimulate one's creativity with more direct revelations on one's own creative process. The other is that dream material provides inspiration for creative work. Both are true and it will be up to the individual which may be more valuable to you.

Throughout history there have been countless examples on how dreams have provided one with insights within life. For example, the chemist F.A. Kekule was attempting to determine the structure of the benzene molecule. Within a vivid dream he had of a dancing snake latching onto its own tail, the answer revealed to him that the structure was arranged in a ring pattern. This example describes how dreams typically communicate with the dreamer, through a metaphoric or symbolic way.

How to keep a dream log:

Keep a journal next to your bed. When you wake from dreaming, immediately pick up your journal and a pencil and begin writing as much as you can remember from the dream you just awoke from. The more this is practiced, the more you will remember your dreams. Recalling dreams can be done by writing words, drawing images, or notes to songs. Let the dream communicate to you in a way that you can relate to. Dreams can have layers of meaning and perhaps have nothing to do with the actual dream, but reveal something relevant to your current life.

Daydream

We have all had those moments of staring out into space and find ourselves thinking about something else that is not related to what we may be doing. This is called day dreaming and often occurs unconsciously, though can also be performed in a conscious manner. This exercise will explore the unconscious portion. This will need some additional effort on your part in keeping your journal nearby as you are embarking on this course because day dreaming occurs when it may seem to be most unlikely it will.

When you come across a day dream, be sure to record it immediately after you notice you had one. Pay attention to what it was about and write down any reflections on why you think you may have been thinking about that particular thing. Why was it that those particular thoughts came up in the midst of your day? What do they reveal about your inner desires or longing? How can you begin to fulfill these desires?

Imagination & Guided Imagery

Within Blake's opening of *Auguries of Innocence*:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
 And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
 Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
 And Eternity in an hour
 -Blake, 1863

Your imagination is an intangible asset that is with you for a lifetime and the more you exercise it, like a muscle, the more it can continue to grow and be a tool from which you may find that an infinite source of creativity can manifest from.

Guided imagery intertwines words and imagination to evoke positive scenarios and possibilities to stimulate and inspire your creativity. This Creative Gateway has limitless implications and can be applied to a variety of scenarios. Literally anything you want to explore can be turned into a guided imagery exercise.

Through guided imagery you can learn to use your imagination to 'create the state you want' meaning you can actually change how you are feeling by changing your focus. This can have an array of possibilities as well. From getting you from an undesired state of mind to a more harmonious one, or by cultivating your perfect creativity space. Your imagination knows no limits.

Because of the innumerable ways in which imagination can be applied to our everyday lives to enhance creativity, there will be several different examples provided here.

Positive Affirmations:

Research shows that our bodies react the same whether we are actually experiencing something or just imagining something. This can be used in a way of cultivating perfect health for your body. Start with positive affirmations like, "I am healthy," "I am vibrant," "I am filled with infinite creativity," "I am fulfilling my life's purpose." These have a substantial affect for the body and mind.

Relaxed Imagination:

This Gateway can be reached during your engagement within an activity. Take a break from what you are working on and try to let go of your mind, sit back and simply observe what you have created. Guide your body to relax and soften the eyesight. Just allow yourself to passively and objectively look at what you have done at that moment. Take a few minutes to simply reflect and let the mind wander on the different aspects of your project. There can be an elegant dance of interactions that may give you a breath of fresh air when it comes to cultivating creativity. Be sure to record any inspiring activity from this Gateway.

Active Imagination:

For this exercise, focus on a project that you are currently working on. Go ahead and lay down and close your eyes. Now start to think of your project, in how it exists now and how you envision it. What do you see it as evolving into? Be really expansive here and see how this project may have the grandest effect as possible. How do you see it affecting the world? Who do you see encountering your project? What are the reactions? How is this project a reflection of you? What do you learn about yourself from this? After giving this portion of the exercise some consideration and after you have recorded this within your journal some of the insights received. Take some time to reflect on where you are now within the project and how you may go about getting to where you just envisioned being. How long may this take? What steps are necessary? Go ahead and write them down. You do not need to follow them, but simply suggesting them to your imagination, and plant these images and ideas into the fertile ground you have just created.

Shamanic Journey

Shamanic journeys have been utilized by indigenous around the globe for centuries to communion with the unknown (Ingerman & Wesselman, 2010). A shamanic journey is a self-induced meditative trance state through which an individual can enter various dreamscapes (Crockett, 2009). The journey uses your visual imagination combined with the rhythmic power of the drum to transport you into non-ordinary states of reality. Sometimes, we find ourselves in a non-intentional, self-induced state, such as when we are daydreaming, during meditation, or during complete relaxation.

Within a shamanic journey you can consciously ask questions within the deep meditative states and receive insights in the forms of visions or sounds or other forms of insights. As with the other Creative Gateways, the setting of intention is key before the journey, and is even more important as the states become more within the unconscious realm. This will guide the way for a clearer message to be received.

These kind of journeys have the potential to provide healing work, empowerment, exploration and to seek guidance and inspiration. The technique introduced only needs the beat of a drum or a rattle as used by indigenous. It is safe and easy to do and can be practiced alone with minimal equipment. Success improves dramatically with practice, so do not be discouraged if you are unable to slip into this state at your first try.

To begin, choose a space that is quiet and where you will be undisturbed. Have a rug laid out on the floor and a blanket nearby to cover yourself. You may cleanse the room with sage, with the sound of an instrument or in a way that makes sense for you. Set an intention for your journey before you begin to what you would like to explore. This can be a certain aspect of your life, possibly within your career, family life, or it

can be a broad question you are inquiring about, such as: “how can I be more creative?” or “what are my unique gifts?”

Have your journal by your side to record after you come out of your journey. Lie down on a mat or blanket, cover your body with a blanket to keep warm and have a handkerchief to cover your eyes.

To do a journey without being guided by someone else, you would need to listen to a recording or to guide yourself. With practice one can successfully come into a shamanic state without much effort. Start listening to a recording of a monotonous drum beat or start to produce one yourself with a drum or a rattle. This beating sets the brain into a theta state. Guide your body to completely relax. Imagine yourself in a special place in nature that you are familiar with that you find inspiring and comforting. Find an opening within the Earth, such as a waterfall or a hole in a tree. Then travel down the opening into the Earth. Imagine what it feels like, taking in the whole experience with as much sensory imagination as possible. The opening widens into an underground cave. What do you see, hear, sense? Note any images or beings that make themselves present. If an animal or person addresses you, you may choose to engage in conversation. Ask questions about where you are. If there are any messages for you. When you hear a faster drumbeat, it is time to return to your tunnel and follow your route back to your personal passageway.

Take a few moments to reorient yourself. Remember what you saw as clearly as you can before you open your eyes. When you are ready, open your eyes and log your journey within your journal. Sketch what you remember. You may draw a map of where you were or any pictures of the experience. Shamanic journeys are like dreams in that the messages that come through them may not be direct, and may contain metaphors and symbols. Poetry may also be a nice way to record your experience and state.

Closing Guidance

Congratulations on completing the Introspective Course in Creativity! You now have a plethora of tools, a journal filled with your insights and revelations, and perhaps a new sense of what you have to offer the world. These can all be guiding lights in journeying to your creative self. Let them move you, inspire you, and enhance every day. Remember the potential within each moment and that therein lies a vast ocean of wonder and amazement that is a part of being human.

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