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Enhancing Creativity in Organizational Teams: Development of The Spark Program

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Development of The Spark Program

Kimberly N. Morehead

An Abstract of a Project
in
Creativity and Change Leadership

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2022

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

Abstract of Project

Organizational teams have experienced unprecedented change since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic—such as frequent changes in leadership, increased turnover, and shifting to full-time remote work—which have impacted their ability to form lasting creative connections. This project addresses the challenge of the above changes by introducing a creativity-boosting program called The Spark, designed to help organizational teams remain inspired, connected, and energized throughout times of change. Following an overview of the rationale for this project and a review of the pertinent literature, the process plan is provided in detail. The project resulted in a program structure based on the Torrance Incubation Model (TIM), a flexible workshop design, and valuable feedback on the program. Key learnings include a deeper understanding of group creativity and diversity, applied learning from Creativity and Change Leadership, a comparison of creative thinking assessments such as FourSight and Kirton Adaptation-Innovation Inventory (KAI), foundations of instructional design, and challenges encountered along the way.

Keywords: organizational teams, creativity, diversity, innovation, inspiration, workshop, corporate, instructional design

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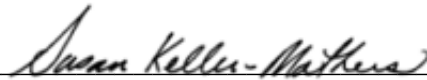A Project in
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Dates of Approval:

_____May 11, 2022_____   _____

Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Associate Professor

_____May 11, 2022_____   _____

Kimberly N. Morehead
Student

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SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Purpose and Description of Project

Key Data

My master's project was inspired by my philosophy of creativity, as explored in Creativity and Change Leadership during the Summer of 2021. Throughout my professional career, I've grown increasingly curious about what makes people creative and what methods people use to unlock their creativity. In my letter of intent to apply to the Creative Studies program, now known as the Creativity and Change Leadership program, I quoted a lyric from the Journey into Imagination attraction at Walt Disney World: "One little spark of inspiration is at the heart of all creation (Sherman & Sherman, 1983)." The line, though kitschy, perfectly encapsulates why I wanted to join this program: to learn how to help others find their spark.

My career has been rife with both positive and negative influences which have impacted my creative spark. I've had leaders who micromanaged me until I no longer cared about the work I was producing, diminishing my creative spark almost completely. Conversely, I've worked with individuals who brightened it so much that we were able to create unique ideas regularly. Now, over 20 years later, I've finally realized that what truly makes my heart sing is being able to witness the moment of inspiration—the spark—at which great ideas are born. Therefore, the purpose of my master's project is to design a program for my organization that will help individuals and teams reignite their spark of creativity. Drawing inspiration from the Sherman Brothers' song lyrics, the working title for this program is The Spark.

Description of Project

The Spark will eventually be a creativity-boosting program offered internally to my organization. For the purposes of my master's project, most of my efforts will be focused on gathering data from scholarly sources, literature, reputable web-based sources, and my

organization itself, to ensure the creation of a program that's designed with the audience in mind. At a high level, the structure of the program would be as follows.

Figure 1

Learning Activities for The Spark

Section Title	Learning Activities
Opening	• Welcome & introductions • Warm-up / ice breaker • Review agenda and goals for the session(s) ahead
Individual Discovery	• Creative thinking assessment for each participant, such as FourSight (FourSight Group, LLC, n.d.) • Individual visioning & storyboarding exercise
Team Discovery	• Activity that promotes diversity and helps to reframe their unconscious bias • Exercise to promote understanding or accepting change • Explore Creative Climate and Psychological Safety
Discovering the Creativity Problem	• Use CPS to define the team's creativity problem and find novel solutions for it • Leverage Appreciative Inquiry to design the ideal future state of their team based on ideas from CPS session
Closing	• Reveal creative thinking assessment results from opening; debrief on individual and team dynamics of the results • Group activity to commemorate the highlights from session

| | • Provide a takeaway for each participant containing key concepts and tools they can take back to their work areas |
| | • Acquire individual (written) assessment of session |

Personal Goals

The Spark will help me answer the following questions, which are the goals I hope to achieve with this program:

- What might be all the ways to inspire teams?

- How might teams learn to stretch their creative thinking skills?

- How to have fun and make the program something they look forward to?

- How might teams identify where they are and where they are going?

- What might be all the ways to improve everyday team creativity?

- What might be all the ways to keep teams energized and motivated to stay engaged?

- How might teams acknowledge unique perspectives and use them as creative fuel?

Rationale for Selection

My organization, which has a nearly 100-year history of creativity and ingenuity in storytelling as well as its ability to create transformative experiences, is no stranger to the post-pandemic strain most companies are experiencing. The financial strain of the pandemic caused ripples within my organization which have become waves that we're still feeling today. From massive layoffs to repeated price increases for the consumer, the decisions being made at the executive level with the intent of keeping the company afloat, are being called into question and challenged vocally by customers and employees alike.

Every day, we continue to lose highly valuable and creative people who have dedicated their entire careers to this organization, as they're choosing other career paths completely or deciding that working for this organization is simply not for them anymore. In previous years, an exodus of this magnitude would have been unheard of within my organization, because people truly felt inspired and valued. It used to be a place at which employees considered it an honor to remain for their entire careers. Today, inspiration is noticeably lacking, morale is suffering, and people are walking away without hesitation. My hope is that by creating an immersive experience allowing teams to come together on a regular basis for connection, inspiration, and creative problem-solving, they will form stronger creative bonds over time and eventually feel freer to explore the dimensions of creative climate they haven't experienced before.

In addition to the creativity crisis, we are living in times of near-constant change due to the pandemic. As we march towards the end of our second year of post-pandemic life—and adjust to the reality that it will likely never fully go away—there are numerous changes we should expect to remain part of our lives for the foreseeable future. In our personal lives, many of us have become accustomed to changes like seeing families and friends less frequently, not dining at restaurants as much as we'd like, and refraining from travel to certain parts of the world. In our professional lives, many have adjusted to the new normal of remote work, seeing coworkers and leaders on computer screens instead of in person.

Most remote professionals would argue that there are great benefits to remote work, including more productivity, a better work-life balance, and the lack of a commute leading to cost savings on gas, car repairs, and tolls. These benefits absolutely cannot be denied; however, there have also been effects that are less evident and have taken a bit longer to make themselves known. One such example—which is informed by my own experience—is that remote work can cause a strain on an organizational team's ability to maintain a solid creative connection. Remote teams, especially those who previously worked together in person, are finding it

increasingly more difficult to find inspiration and energy, and to stay motivated while working remotely.

SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE

Much of the literature I will be using for this project comes from work I've done and concepts I've been introduced to throughout my master's program. That said, this list of sources is not final. To be as thorough as possible and to make The Spark successful in the long term, I will further explore and experiment with creativity tools and measures that I haven't researched in depth. During the research and implementation phases of the project, I anticipate several new sources being added to this list.

Sources that will inform the design of the program as it relates to CPS and the foundations of creative thinking include:

FourSight Group, LLC. *Individual + Team Assessment*. https://www.foursightonline.com/team-assessment

Kaufman, J. C., & Beghetto, R. A. (2009). Beyond big and little: The four c model of creativity. *Review of General Psychology, 13(1),* 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013688

Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011). *Creativity unbound: An introduction to creative process, 5th edition*. FourSight, LLC.

Rhodes, J. M. (1961, April). An analysis of creativity. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 42(7),* 305-310. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20342603

Puccio, G., Mance, M., Switalski, L.B. & Reali, P.D. (2012). *Creativity rising: Creative thinking and creative problem solving in the 21st century*. ICSC Press.

For the design of The Spark itself, I will employ learnings from the following sources on curriculum design and facilitation:

Burnett, C., & Figliotti, J. (2015). *Weaving creativity into every strand of your curriculum*. Knowinnovation Inc.

Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestien, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011). *Facilitation: A door to creative leadership,* (4th ed.). FourSight, LLC.

Torrance, E. P. & Safter, H. T. (1990). *The incubation model of teaching: Getting beyond the aha!* Buffalo, NY: Bearly Ltd.

Some of the tools I intend to use for this program are based on the following sources:

Cooperrider, D. L. & Whitney, D. (2005). *Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Ekvall, G. (1996). Organizational climate for creativity and innovation. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (1), 105-123.

Inspiration is a key part of The Spark, so there will be a number of sources that serve to inspire and inform my design:

Catmull, E. (2014). *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the unseen forces that stand in the way of true inspiration* (1st ed.). Random House.

Dilts, R. (1994). *Strategies of genius*. Meta Publications.

Kanter, R. M. (2020). *Think outside the building: How advanced leaders can change the world one smart innovation at a time*. Hachette Book Group.

The following sources will be used to frame the rationale around team diversity and its benefits as they relate to creativity:

Fuller, P., Murphy, M., & Chow, A. (2020). *The leader's guide to unconscious bias: How to reframe bias, cultivate connection, and create high-performing teams*. Simon & Schuster.

Gassmann, O. (2001). Multicultural teams: increasing creativity and innovation by

    diversity. *Creativity and Innovation Management,* 10(2), 88-95.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8691.00206

Glăveanu, V. P. (2016). *The palgrave handbook of creativity and culture research* (1st ed.).

    Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-46344-9

Lynch, J. (2019). Advertising industry evolution: agency creativity, fluid teams and diversity. An

    exploratory investigation. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 35(9-10), 845–

    866. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2019.1635188

Nouri, R., Erez, M., Lee, C., Liang, J., Bannister, B. D., & Chiu, W. (2015). Social context: Key to

    understanding culture's effects on creativity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36(7),

    899–918. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1923

Reuvers, M., van Engen, M. L., Vinkenburg, C. J., & Wilson-Evered, E. (2008).

    Transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour: Exploring the relevance of

    gender differences. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 17(3), 227-

    244. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8691.2008.00487.x

Taylor, C., Ivcevic, Z., Moeller, J., & Brackett, M. (2020). Gender and support for creativity at

    work. *Creativity and Innovation Management,* 29(3), 453–

    464. https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12397

SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

Plan to Achieve Goals and Outcomes

Acknowledging that this problem is much larger than what can reasonably solved for one master's project, I intend to follow it through beyond graduation until The Spark becomes established first for my immediate team, and eventually, as an experience I can offer to my broader organization. For this project, my focus will be on designing and developing a well-planned and research-backed experience that will be ready for immediate implementation in my organization at the end of the semester. During the implementation phase of my master's project, I intend to pilot small components of the experience with my immediate team—such as individual storyboarding and/or FourSight—to gauge energy and interest. In addition, I will be partnering with leadership inside my organization to ensure its long-term success.

Project Timeline

Figure 2

Project Timeline

Activity	Deadline	Support Needed
Submit concept paper for approval	February 9, 2022	Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Start a journal for the project	February 9, 2022	
Begin research to identify the tools and measures needed for the program	February 14, 2022	
Pitch program concept to immediate leadership within my organization	February 28, 2022	Employer
Begin designing program with both organizational and Buffalo State faculty oversight	March 1, 2022	Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers and Employer
Submit Sections 1-3	March 21, 2022	Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Pilot aspects of program with immediate team & get feedback	March 15 – April 10, 2022	Employer

Repeat the above step with adjustments based on feedback (time permitting)	April 11 – April 28, 2022	Employer
Adapt the program design for virtual participants (time permitting)	April 11 – April 28, 2022	Employer
Submit Sections 4-6	April 25, 2022	Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Complete design of program	April 28, 2022	
CRS 690 project completion and presentation	May 19, 2022	Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Work with Employer's talent development team to design program for a broader audience within my organization	Ongoing	Employer
Review feedback gathered during design of program and adjust as needed	Ongoing	Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers and Employer

Evaluation Plan

Driven by the goals mentioned in the first section of this paper, I will develop similar goals for the design of The Spark which will be measured through verbal and written feedback sourced from individuals inside my organization.

Figure 3

Project Evaluation Plan

Goal	Action or Measure
Conduct research to ensure the goals for the program itself are being met: • Discover ways to inspire teams through creative thinking. • Explore how teams might learn to stretch their creative thinking skills. • Design a program that allows participants to have fun and make it something they look forward to. • Find an engaging way to explore how teams might identify where they are and where they are going. • Identify ways to improve everyday team creativity. • Research ways to keep teams energized and motivated to stay engaged. • Inspire teams to acknowledge unique perspectives and use them as creative fuel.	Document initial directional and conceptual feedback from organization leadership, faculty, and sounding board partner(s).
Conduct several pilot/experiment exercises with my immediate team.	Document feedback from my team after each pilot exercise.
Gain support of departmental leadership, HR, and legal, to establish The Spark as a necessity for our teams.	Share ongoing progress updates with department senior management and executives.
Gain support of my organization's talent development department for broader segment-wide expansion.	Share ongoing progress updates with the director of talent development.
Complete the master's project with a finished, ready-to-implement design for The Spark.	Have a completed program designed with slides, accessories, resources, and takeaways.

SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

Structure of The Spark

The goal was to design a workshop that boosts organizational team creativity and connection, which is often diminished in times of unprecedented change and ambiguity. Therefore, to make The Spark successful, it was important to spend a good amount of time fine-tuning the details of each component of the workshop. This exploration required careful consideration about how the program could be structured for both a face-to-face and virtual delivery method. Initially, the plan was to design The Spark as a wholly in-person experience. It became clear very early on in discussions with colleagues within my organization that The Spark will need to be customizable to fit the needs of individual teams, many of which have members spread geographically across the United States. To that end, the pilot program is being offered to a small team who is based in the same metropolitan area for iterative feedback until the in-person components are solidified. While in-person is the ideal, there is still a need for a virtual contingency plan. Due to the hybrid return-to-work model, there are frequently days in which only a portion of any team is physically present in the office at the same time. Teams in the same metropolitan area will be encouraged to make time for this workshop in person. However, since many teams are split between coasts and time zones, there will always need to be an option for attendees who want to participate remotely.

As a result, each phase of The Spark was designed with in-person and virtual participation in mind; when applicable, there are special considerations noted for virtual delivery of the content. For in-person groups, the workshop is designed to take place over the course of one business day. For virtual groups, it will be a condensed into a four-part series of one-hour synchronous sessions delivered via online video conferencing software. The content will also be made available asynchronously for those with unavoidable scheduling or time zone conflicts. In alignment with the Torrance Incubation Model (TIM), the design of The Spark is based on a three-phased structure (Torrance, 1990): Heighten Anticipation, Deepen

Expectations, and Extend the Learning. Following is a detailed breakdown of the components of each phase.

Heighten Anticipation

To increase workshop participants' enthusiasm about the upcoming program, they will receive a link in advance to an individual creative thinking profile or assessment. At the time of writing this paper, the plan is to go with FourSight (FourSight Group, LLC, n.d.) for this assessment, although there might be a barrier on the enterprise level when it comes to purchasing the assessment for organizations. Alternatively, FourSight might be used as a guide to create a custom questionnaire for participants and create a space for internal reflection. Asking the participants to complete an individual assessment in advance accomplishes two goals: it heightens their anticipation as prescribed by the TIM, and it allows the facilitator to be prepared with each participant's results by the start of the first session.

Deepen Expectations

The second phase of The Spark will be the most content-rich, as this is where participants will be digging into the details of their creative exploration. As part of the Individual Discovery portion, participants will have the opportunity to: consider their personal definition of creativity; clarify their personal goal, wish, or challenge; and complete a personal storyboard with their identified goal, wish, or challenge in mind. Within the Team Discovery Portion, workshop participants will: learn how the results from their individual creative thinking assessments play a role in their team dynamics; use their new knowledge of themselves and each other to assemble a diverse team of superheroes using characters inspired by the FourSight profiles; participate in a game with constantly changing rules (Burnett & Figliotti, 2015) that provides experiential learning about creative climate (Ekvall, 1996) as well as tolerance for ambiguity (Puccio et. al, 2011). For virtual sessions, each session meeting will conclude with a reflection question designed to encapsulate the theme of the session and prepare participants' thinking for the next session meeting.

The closing portion of The Spark, Discovering the Creativity Problem, combines the divergent and convergent thinking phases of Creative Problem Solving (Miller et. al, 2011) with Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The events of the workshop will culminate in the team working together to solve a creativity problem they have collectively identified as their ideal focal point. By guiding the group through a series of thoughtful clarifying questions, the facilitator will help the team pinpoint the problem that they believe creates the biggest barrier to their collective creativity. Subsequently, they will run through a CPS session to ideate around solutions and converge on a possible solution. To reinforce the importance of creative collaboration and apply their knowledge, they will take part in an exercise based on Appreciative Inquiry called "Journey into Our Imagination," in which they will define, discover, dream, and design their team's destiny. This will be the closing synchronous exercise for The Spark; the goal is for the team to walk out of the workshop having a clearly defined goal in mind, as well as solid ideas on how to achieve their collective goal.

Extend the Learning

To extending the learning at the end of this experience, attendees will walk away with something that connects to what they've learned in the experience and reinforces the key messages. At the conclusion of The Spark, participants will leave with a collection of takeaways including: a certificate of completion, a visual representation of what they worked together to create in the "Journey into Our Imagination" exercise, and a one-sheet reference for tips on everyday creativity. For virtual sessions, these documents will be delivered electronically. In addition to the takeaways related to the workshop, participants will also be asked to complete an assessment of the workshop itself, which will be collected electronically whether in-person or virtual.

<div align="center">

Flexible Workshop Design

</div>

The Spark is designed for anyone to facilitate, though the initial iterations will be facilitated by this author. To prepare future facilitators of The Spark for success, there will be a

period of training based on the foundations of Creative Problem Solving (CPS) facilitation, as well as the three-phased structure of The Spark (see Appendix B). Facilitator training covers CPS-related topics such as: the basics of CPS, ideal setup for an in-person session, roles in a CPS session, and how to assess the situation continuously to ensure the group's needs are being met (Miller et. al, 2011). More specifically to The Spark, the training will also familiarize facilitators with the tools that have been preselected for each phase of the workshop.

The workshop content will be customized based on group needs, which will be determined by asking team leaders to fill out a questionnaire as part of the registration process to help the facilitator determine which activities to load into the program for each group. Certain activities may not be applicable or possible for certain teams; for example, divergent thinking with a field trip to force connections may not be possible for a team whose members are spread geographically across the country. Therefore, there will be a cache of tools made available electronically for facilitators, and the tools will be organized by workshop stage. The questionnaire also helps to assess whether The Spark is what the team needs.

PPCo as Feedback for The Spark Program

A creativity tool introduced to participants at the beginning of the Creativity and Change Leadership Program is PPCo, which helps to evaluate a solution or idea by identifying its pluses, potentials, concerns, and ultimately diverging on ways to overcome those concerns (Miller et. al, 2011). It was necessary to put The Spark through the PPCo process as a way of gathering feedback both internally (i.e., self-conducted) and externally (i.e., conducted with colleagues) during the early stages of its development. Pluses, potentials, and concerns identified for The Spark fell on both the internal (facilitator) and external (colleagues and organization) side. The combined results of the PPCo helped to strengthen the foundation of The Spark.

Pluses

Some of the best features of The Spark according to the PPCo results are: it makes people think differently about creativity, it's a needed break from the everyday, it's built to be flexible, and it's

ultimately enjoyable. It was a welcome encouragement to learn that the goals set forth in the beginning were already being met, with only a portion of the program complete at the time. Of particular interest was the feedback from individuals about their perceptions of creativity; some didn't feel comfortable calling themselves creative amongst other professionals who have backgrounds in visual design. This revelation reinforced the importance of including activities in the workshop that demystify the meaning of creativity and help participants to understand that creativity is a skill that not only everyone has, but it can be enhanced and improved over time.

Potentials

If launched at the intended cadence and scale, The Spark has great potential for all parties involved, including facilitator(s), individual participants, and the organization as a whole. Highlights from the list of potentials in the PPCo include: it could improve everyday creativity amongst teams, it could be implemented as part of the onboarding process for new team members, it could grow to be company-wide, and it could launch new career opportunities for facilitation. Colleagues were particularly enthusiastic about the potential to offer this workshop as new team members are added. Due to the increasing amount of turnover within the organization, it was suggested that The Spark might be offered at regular intervals (e.g., every quarter or every six months) to ensure new team members have an opportunity to align creatively with their coworkers.

Concerns and Overcoming Concerns

No new idea or undertaking is without its concerns. Specific concerns that emerged were: risk of inadvertently conveying unhappiness with my current role, lack of interest in continuing The Spark at the organizational level, and concern that it won't always achieve the goals set forth. To overcome these concerns, it was necessary to reframe them as positives, since there is no way to guarantee what will happen in the future. For example, the risk of conveying unhappiness with my current role can be overcome if when reframed as an opportunity to practice the creative leadership skill of tolerating risk (Puccio et. al, 2011).

SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS

Deeper Understanding of Group Creativity & Diversity

Researching and testing portions of The Spark have provided real-life demonstrations of the dynamics of group creativity that have been invaluable in the development of the program. Being part of a team comes with a myriad of considerations and challenges, one of the largest being the need to acknowledge diversity amongst team members. The term diversity, of course, is extremely broad and covers a wide array of dimensions. Regardless of the lens through which it's being viewed, diversity of all kinds has been linked to creativity and innovation in teams. For example, research indicates that cultural diversity is linked to improved group creativity and can bring valuable and unique perspectives to a team (Glăveanu, 2016). Reuvers et. al (2008) sought to show a link between gender diversity and team creativity, while Gassman (2001) wrote of the benefits of multicultural diversity for innovation. Psychological diversity, which is the basis of the individual and group creative thinking assessment that will be administered during the Heighten Anticipation phase, has been described as "differences in how people organize and process information as an expression of their cognitive styles and personality traits" (Puccio et. al, 2011, pg. 244).

Additionally, this project has afforded a deeper understanding of individual creative preferences and their relationship to the collective. The FourSight profile was instrumental in laying the foundation for this understanding. Provided The Spark is approved to move forward with FourSight at its core, this assessment will provide invaluable insights into individuals and how they can better function as part of a team. In addition to FourSight, the distinction between adaptor and innovator provides another way in which to consider the dynamics of group creativity (Puccio et. al, 2011). The Kirton Adaptor-Innovator (KAI) Theory (Kirton, 1976) characterizes adaptors as individuals who are reliable, methodical, and prefer to improve existing ideas and systems. Alternatively, innovators are undisciplined, tangential thinkers, and prefer to produce original ideas (Puccio et. al, 2011). The key takeaway from this distinction is

that neither mindset is better than the other, because they can coexist to form a strong and highly creative team. It's the diversity of these mindsets that leads to innovative ideas and solutions.

Applied Learning from Creativity and Change Leadership

In both planning and testing elements of The Spark, there have been seemingly endless opportunities to apply the creative leadership skills introduced throughout the Creativity and Change Leadership program. Cognitive skills such as diagnostic thinking and tactical thinking, as well as affective skills such as dreaming and sensing gaps, came into play during the planning stage of The Spark (Puccio et. al, 2011).

Colleagues who participated in the pilot activities were afforded the chance to explore some of these skills as well. Each activity for the program has been chosen to meet the specific goals, and each has the added benefit of teaching participants new affective creative leadership skills. For example, once the program officially launches, appreciative inquiry will enhance their ability to sense gaps, their capacity for dreaming. Additionally, participating in a discussion on creative climate or a creative activity that explores psychological diversity will enhance their sensitivity to the environment.

Knowledge of Creativity Measures

A key component of developing this program was identifying the best measure or assessment for creative thinking preferences. Considering some of the better-known choices, including FourSight, Kirton Adaptation-Innovation Inventory (KAI), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), 16Personalities, and Creative Types by Adobe, it quickly became evident that some of the popularized measures are not based in scholarly research, or the creators chose to be opaque as to the validity of the assessments. In addition to validity, the secondary goal was to find an assessment that was appropriate for The Spark. Since one of the specific goals of this program is to uncover individuals' creative thinking preferences and help them understand how that individual preference impacts the group, it was important to find a measure that provided

results that were both relevant and useful. Comparing several available options revealed that FourSight and KAI are likely the best choices, as they both focus on assessing creative style or preference—which is what I'm looking to help individuals better understand—and they are both backed by well-researched scholarly data.

Figure 4

Comparison of Assessments

	FourSight	KAI	MBTI	16Personalities	Adobe Creative Types
Backed by Scholarly Research	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unclear	No
Individual Considerations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group Considerations	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Focuses on Creative Style or Preference	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Foundations of Instructional Design

To deliver The Spark as a finished product, the instructional design methods of backwards design and integrated design came heavily into play, as well as designing for learning outcomes and interactivity. These methods, which nicely complemented the existing TIM structure of The Spark, were introduced during a Spring 2022 elective offered by Buffalo State's Adult Education program called Instructional Design and Assessment. This elective was initially described as being focused on instruction design for online courses, which seemed quite relevant for the purpose of better understanding the possible methods for delivering The Spark virtually. However, the course offers a much more holistic look at instruction for adults, with online delivery being supplemental knowledge. Ultimately, these methods are useful for The Spark whether it's delivered in person or online.

At the heart of any curriculum, learning outcomes need to be considered in each phase of the design process (Fink, 2003). If a course or workshop is designed with the goals in mind from the start, specifically with a written plan describing how each learning activity will seek to meet a specific learning outcome, then there is a much better chance for success. This practice is known as backwards design: designing a course with the end in mind and working backwards from the learning outcomes. At a higher level, backwards design is a component of integrated design, which is a course design method that starts with the defining learning outcomes, followed by designing the content, and lastly, planning how knowledge will be assessed (Fink, 2003). The Spark was already designed with the goals in mind; having the plan validated in this course proved to be useful.

Although The Spark isn't a traditional course, participants will still benefit from assessment. Formative assessment, which is a check for understanding before the end of a course or program, allows the facilitator and participants to make sure goals are being met before the program is over (Juwah et. al, 2004). The flexibility of The Spark means that if deemed necessary after formative assessment, the facilitator can pivot towards an activity that more closely aligns with the group's needs. Summative assessment, which is conducted at the end of a course or program, looks at the culmination of the knowledge shared (MSUM, 2014, pg. 14). While summative assessment is certainly necessary in an academic space to assess students' grasp of the material, what's important for The Spark is that the participants walk away feeling more inspired, more creative, more energized, and more bonded with their teams. Therefore, any summative assessment conducted for this program will most likely be directed towards the program itself, to collect feedback on The Spark and use it for continual improvement.

Interactivity is another key element in instructional design that directly relates to the goals of The Spark. One of the known assumptions of adult learners is that they draw heavily from personal experience while learning (Tennant, 1986). This assumption can be interpreted to

mean that adult learners need opportunities to share their experiences with others as a form of interaction and further connecting with the material.

Interactivity can be accomplished in countless ways, such as providing case-based activities, breaking participants into small groups to discuss personal experiences, or establishing a discussion forum for virtually conducted workshops. In the context of The Spark, nearly all the activities in the program will be interactive. This is an intentional choice, as to effectively retain content, adult learners need opportunities to make connections with the content and apply it to real life (National Highway Institute, 2003). A design built for interactivity is based on a balance of content, connection, and application (National Highway Institute, 2003).

Figure 5

Upright Pyramid of Interactivity
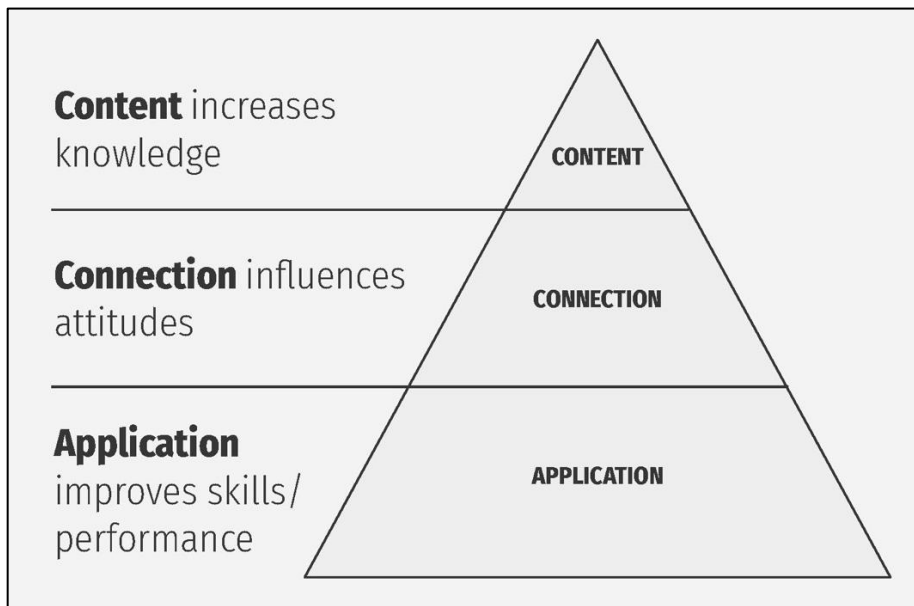
Note. The upright pyramid illustrates the balance between application, connection, and content to ensure maximum retention.

Challenges

As is the case with most projects, The Spark encountered some unexpected roadblocks during its research, design, and planning stages. The initial challenge was the conundrum of design for both in person and virtual groups. Although the ideal was to design a fully in person experience, the reality simply did not allow for that to be. The positive result of this roadblock is that thinking about both experiences concurrently during planning puts The Spark in a better position to be implemented more rapidly once all the remaining organizational approvals are secured.

Additionally, seeking feedback from colleagues who are all dealing with demanding projects and packed schedules, proved to be another significant challenge. The nature of the climate within this organization means unexpected situations occur frequently, thus participants' availability was extremely difficult to obtain. The initial session was virtual (see Appendix A), as most participants are still working remotely. Eventually, two subsequent meetings were conducted in person. Once enough people were available to convene, the feedback and energy were immensely positive and encouraging.

A key idea that emerged from the sessions with colleagues is that it might be nice to figure out a way to conduct The Spark with larger teams than it was originally planned for. This is considered a challenge because this program was built on the foundations of CPS, and it's been proven that groups of more than 7 or 8 people can be a challenge to facilitate in a CPS session. The recommended maximum for The Spark is currently 10 people; although that is still slightly higher than the ideal, it was necessary to accommodate organizational teams of varying size. Designing The Spark for larger teams, or even entire departments, is sure to be a welcome challenge when the time comes.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Designing The Spark program has proved to be a challenging and rewarding experience on professional, academic, and personal levels. It truly feels like the ideal culmination of the past two years of study in the Creativity and Change Leadership program; undertaking this project has expanded my own creativity and change leadership skills. The scope of the project initially seemed like an undertaking that could be too large for a semester's worth of work. Additionally, working for an organization of this size and designing something that would be supported by its leadership felt like a particularly daunting challenge. However, attacking a castle isn't something that should be done head-on (Kanter, 2021). Instead, I decided to start small, go in through the side doors and back entrances, have individual conversations, with the hope that eventually, those small ripples will turn into large-scale change.

Professional & Academic Impact

On a professional level, most of the work I've been doing for the past two years has remained private and used for my own benefit: I've implemented a weekly ideation series in my role to practice my facilitation skills, and I've conducted small workshops with groups of friends for the purpose of experimenting with tools to see how they work for me as a facilitator. When I started working on The Spark, my academic and professional pursuits were made public to my colleagues and leadership for the first time. From that moment forward, I began to receive requests to facilitate brainstorm sessions with partners outside of my immediate team, often with creative executives across the company. Additionally, I have been granted an open invitation to facilitate The Spark for groups beyond my internal department. To have a network of professionals who put their trust in me and support my professional interests at the same time has been a truly welcome reward. Academically, I have stretched myself far beyond what I perceived my limits to be at the start of this master's program. Learning and researching topics for this master's project such as creative climate, gender and creativity, cultural diversity, and

even exploring the foundations of instructional design, have proven that my potential was only limited by my imagination.

Personal Impact

In my Fall 2021 strategic planning paper, I noted that an area of opportunity uncovered in my 360-degree feedback assessment was the perceived lack of confidence I project when presenting my own work. Frankly, I found this to be a surprising bit of feedback, because I rarely feel that my work is unworthy or undeserving of praise, so hearing that observers think I'm not proud of my accomplishments was eye-opening. I can say without question that when it comes to The Spark, I'm extremely proud of the work I've done. It's my hope that putting these words into writing will be the catalyst for me to begin openly discussing my accomplishments and sharing the benefit of my hard work with others. The Spark will be a success. It will transform organizational teams. It will help me to accomplish all the goals I've set forth.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Selected Slides from Initial Virtual Pilot Session
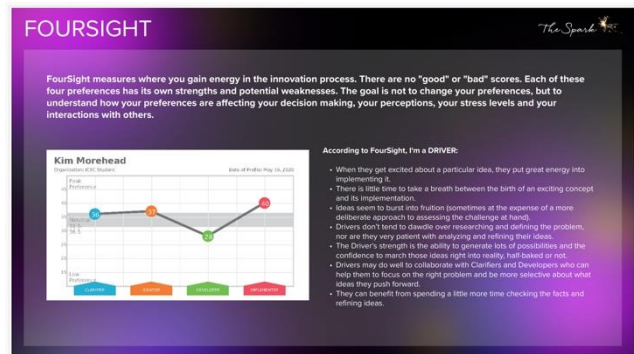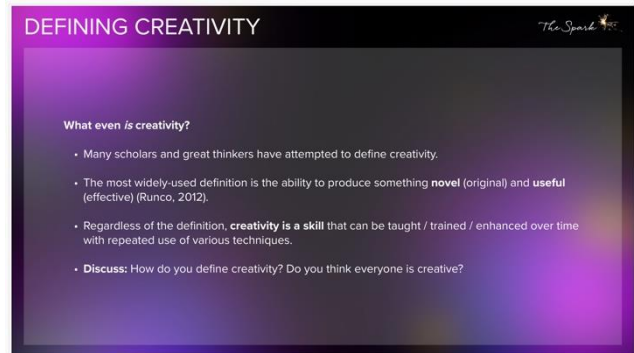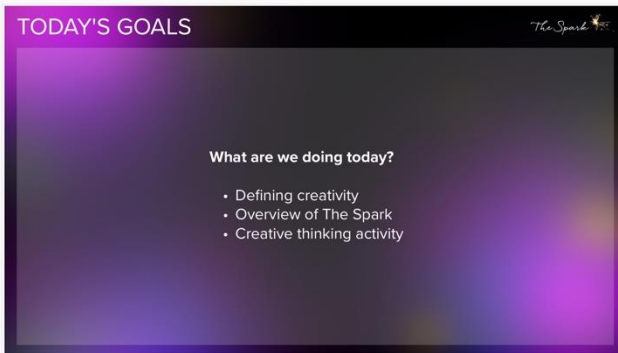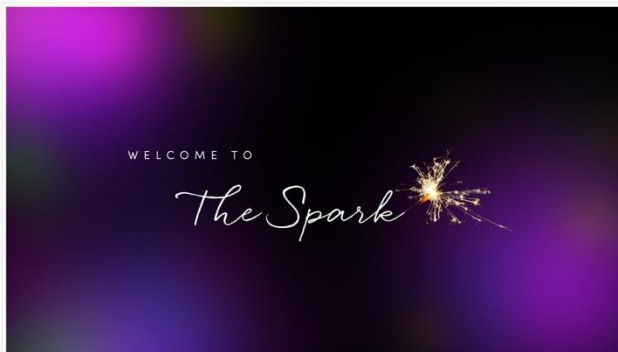
Appendix B

Selected Pages from Facilitator's Training Guide

The Spark
Facilitator Training Guide

Program Goals

The Spark aims to address the following questions:
- What might be all the ways to inspire teams?
- How might teams learn to stretch their creative thinking skills?
- How to have fun and make the program something they look forward to?
- How might teams identify where they are and where they are going?
- What might be all the ways to improve everyday team creativity?
- What might be all the ways to keep teams energized and motivated to stay engaged?
- How might teams acknowledge unique perspectives and use them as creative fuel?

Facilitator Goals

As a Facilitator, your main task is to ensure the creativity needs of the group are being met. To do that, we ask you to continually assess the following:
- Are the participants fully engaged?
- Are the group discussions energetic?
- Is technology a barrier?
- Are you meeting people where they are?
- Are participants having fun?
- Are YOU having fun?

Program Structure

The Torrance Incubation Model (TIM) includes 3 phases:
- Heighten Anticipation - Get the group's attention, ignite curiosity, and inspire motivation to learn.
- Deepen Understanding – Lead the group through meaningful learning activities.
- Extend the Learning – Give participants fuel to reflect on their learning beyond the workshop.

The Spark is organized into phases based on which part of the discovery journey your group is in.
- Individual Discovery
- Team Discovery
- The Creativity Problem

Part I Individual Discovery	Part II Team Discovery	Part III The Creativity Problem
• Creative Thinking Assessment • Visioning • Storyboarding	• Psychological Diversity • Creative Climate • Change Game	• Define the Problem • Ideate • Journey into Our Imagination

Pre-Session Activity

Learning Phase	Tool Name	Delivery	Instructions	Supplies Needed
Heighten Anticipation	Pre-Session Creative Thinking Assessment (FourSight or KAI)	Virtual via Emailed Link	Send an electronic link to group participants 2 weeks prior to session meeting; request responses no later than 1 week prior to session meeting. Duration: 20 mins	FourSight or KAI Access (Paid)

Part I: Individual Discovery

Learning Phase	Tool Name	Delivery	Instructions	Supplies Needed
Heighten Anticipation	Introductions & Agenda	Virtual or In Person	Introduction of facilitator, review of goals for the session, review of agenda for the session Duration: 10 mins	
Heighten Anticipation	Creativity Discussion	Virtual or In Person	Discuss individual and group definitions of creativity Duration: 20 mins	
Deepen Understanding	Creative Thinking Assessment Debrief	• Virtual via Emailed Results • In Person via Handout	Give group time to review results individually. Set up time to discuss results as a group. Duration: 20 mins	FourSight or KAI Access (Paid)
Deepen Understanding	Visioning	• Virtual via Google Form • In Person via Handout	Provide "Identify goal / wish / challenge" worksheet Duration: 10 mins	• Virtual: Google Form • In Person: Visioning Worksheet, Pens
Deepen Understanding	Storyboarding	• Virtual via Google Form • In Person via Handout	Provide "Storyboarding" worksheet Duration: 20 mins	• Virtual: MURAL account • In Person: Storyboarding Forms, Markers, Pencils

Part II: Team Discovery

Learning Phase	Tool Name	Delivery	Instructions	Supplies Needed
Deepen Understanding	Psychological Diversity Jeopardy	• Virtual via MURAL • In person via presentation software	TBD Duration: 20 mins	Virtual: MURAL Access (Paid) • In person: Presentation software
Heighten Anticipation	Creative Climate Quiz	• Virtual via MURAL • In person via presentation software	TBD Duration: 20 mins	• Virtual: MURAL Access (Paid) • In person: Presentation software
Deepen Understanding	Change Game	• Virtual via MURAL • In person via presentation software	TBD Duration: 20 mins	• Virtual: MURAL Access (Paid) • In Person: Visioning Worksheet, Pens

Part III: The Creativity Problem

Learning Phase	Tool Name	Delivery	Instructions	Supplies Needed
Deepen Understanding	CPS at a Glance	Virtual or In Person	Provide an overview of CPS process (clarify, ideate, develop, implement), roles in a session. Duration: 10 mins	
Deepen Understanding	Define the Problem	• Virtual via MURAL • In person via presentation software	TBD Duration: 20 mins	• Virtual: MURAL Access (Paid) • In person: Presentation software
Deepen Understanding	Ideate	• Virtual via MURAL • In person via presentation software	TBD Duration: 20 mins	• Virtual: MURAL Access (Paid) • In person: Presentation software
Deepen Understanding	Journey into Our Imagination	• Virtual via MURAL • In person via Poster-Size Worksheet	TBD Duration: 10 mins	• Virtual: MURAL Access (Paid) • In Person: Presentation Software, Poster Paper, Markers, Pencils

Post-Session Activities

Learning Phase	Tool Name	Delivery	Instructions	Supplies Needed
Deepen Understanding	Session Debrief	Virtual or In Person	TBD Duration: 10 mins	
Post-Session Reflection	Reflections	Virtual or In Person via Slack channel	TBD	

Permission to Place this Project in the Digital Commons Online

I hereby grant permission to the Department of Creativity and Change Leadership at Buffalo State college permission to place a digital copy of this master's Project Enhancing Creativity in Organizational Teams: Development of The Spark Program as an online resource.

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Kimberly N. Morehead

Date 05-11-2022