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In Search of Suspended Judgment

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A Project in
Creative Studies

by

Irina Mishina

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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An Abstract of a Project
in
Creative Studies

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May 2012

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies
Abstract of Project

In Search of Suspended Judgment

This project is about exploring the process of suspending judgment, and the ways it can be facilitated. The author approaches the subject from different perspectives: through personal practice of suspending judgment and observing one’s own process; through collaboration with professionals from different areas looking for ways of integrating different non-cognitive approaches into a process of Creative Problem Solving (CPS) facilitation; and through exploring practical ways of facilitating suspending judgment with a pilot group. Rather than aiming at achieving concrete results, the project represents the beginning of the journey of exploration. Its main conclusion is that developing the ability to suspend judgment forms an integral part of a personal development process.

Keywords: Creative Problem Solving, CPS, facilitation, suspending judgment, deferring judgment, creative trance
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This project is dedicated to all my friends who always gave me their complete unconditional support throughout two years of this fascinating journey into the land of creativity science and Creative Problem Solving.
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Section One: Background to the Project
Purpose and Description of Project

Creative Problem Solving (CPS) methodology is based, in my opinion, on two main principles: affirmative thinking and suspending judgment. According to my experience, many people conceive the latter as a pure formal rule of division between divergent and convergent thinking and the prohibition to express any evaluation during group ideation. Although this rule is indeed important for the success of a CPS endeavor, I believe the true nature of the concept of suspended judgment is much deeper. It is not so much about avoiding expressing our opinion about others’ ideas but it is the ability to remove, although only temporarily, the filters of one’s perception and to open one’s whole being, farther beyond the cognitive level, to new inputs, whether external or internal, without subjecting those to automatic cognitive reactions, such as interpretation, evaluation and categorization. Suspending judgment allows us to prevent our prior knowledge from inhibiting our ability to explore alternatives. The state of suspended judgment is similar to the state of creative trance in artistic expression, when the creator serves more as a channel of unconscious processes rather than acts in a rational manner.

In my previous work (Mishina, 2011a), I exposed my consciousness view on creativity, according to which I conceive creativity principally as the attitude of consciousness, “doing whatever you do as if for the first time” (p. 5) as opposed to automatic behavior based on established patterns of perception, behavior and thinking. If I need to define the link between this point of view and the most generally accepted definition of creativity as producing something novel and useful (Barron, 1969; Feist, 2010; Puccio, Murdock, and Mance, 2007; Richards, 2007). I would sustain that Creative
Problem Solving as a methodology provides a framework that allows to apply creative attitude to creation of solutions/products that are novel and useful. The concept of suspending judgment as one of the primordial principles of CPS introduces the attitude of consciousness to the process. In order to be able to suspend one’s judgment one, first of all, should be aware of this judgment, hence the state of suspended judgment is closely related to the state of complete self-awareness, mindfulness.

In his work, Jung often considered creative process and creative energy of the psyche as a result of the interaction between the conscious and unconscious parts of the self (Jung, 1917/1928, 1921, 1933). When we suspend judgment, we deliberately invite our unconscious to reveal itself. Our conscious mind gives a form to this unconscious content, but suspending judgment allows us to be aware that this form is only an interpretation based on our previous experience and established patterns, and not the ultimate reality. This awareness opens a possibility for multiple forms being created based on the same content of the unconscious.

There are many theories that consider the nature of the creative trance. The theories of Jung (1998a, 1998b), Kandinsky (1999) and Paz (1956) saw the process of artistic creation as a mystic act of abysmal connection to the collective unconscious. Gilligan (2008), on the other hand, described the interaction between cognitive and somatic selves as relational self, the wholeness of one’s being that allows being connected to oneself, and at the same time, to something bigger than one. When a person opens up to the flow of life that passes through oneself, this connection permits the emergence of something new, that didn’t exist before. Gilligan and Dilts (2011) called this generative state and consider it as a prerequisite for any creative process. Many
esoteric traditions suggest the existence of a global information field that is the source of everything that is unfolding at the material level. Quantum physicist David Bohm even developed a mathematical model that describes the relationship between this field (*implicate order*) and the material reality (*explicate order*) (as cited by Wilson, 1990).

The technique of *Remote Viewing* (Lee, 2008; Puthoff, 1996) is based on the premise that we can access the data from this field if we succeed to remove the filters of our cognitive perception. If we could prove the existence of such a field, my hypothesis would be that during the CPS process, with the playful attitude and the intention to suspend judgment, at certain moments we temporarily remove these filters and get the direct access to that global information field. And bingo, we have an idea! However it is not my purpose here to prove this hypothesis right or wrong. It doesn’t actually matter whether the source of our ideas is external or internal. What is undeniable is that coming up with a creative idea indeed requires “removing the filters” of our standard perception, questioning assumptions, in order to overcome self-imposed barriers, internal blocks, and constraints of a problem space.

Many neuroscientific studies, as cited, for example, in Horan (2009) and Singer (2009), demonstrated that creation of new neuronal connections require prior access to the states of the brain that are different from the one associated with rational cognitive activities. I sustain that suspending judgment facilitates access to these states. The state of suspended judgment is a state of creative trance. We shouldn’t necessarily imagine now a case of an ecstatic artist with crazy eyes, not aware of oneself while creating a masterpiece. From the point of consciousness view on creativity, and especially in the context of Creative Problem Solving, creative trance is a generative state in which a
person is conscious of oneself as an integral part of the greater whole and is able to use this connection to create new forms, ideas, products, solutions.

My project is about exploring the nature of suspended judgment. My purpose is twofold:

1. To develop an integral methodology, for my own professional use, that would combine CPS with other, more holistic approaches, that would allow us to tap into our creative potential at a deeper than just cognitive level and would provide higher creative quality to the work with ideas and solutions.

2. To develop my own skills as a facilitator of creative trance.

Rationale for Selection

I have been involved in some kind of creative activity my whole life. I dreamt of being a dancer. I studied music and fine arts. I was writing poems and novels, and inventing games. When I was 11, I decided to become an actress, and since then, for more than a decade theatre became one of my main passions. The brightest memory of this endeavor is one of the interpretation workshops that I attended in my twenties, preparing myself for interpretation schools auditions. Practically the only thing we were doing during 4 months of that workshop was dancing. We were trying to feel the music, to become the music. Despite my original surprise and resistance (the experience I was offered didn’t really correspond to my concept of dramatic interpretation), slowly I was becoming aware of the creative freedom inside me that I hadn’t felt to such an extent, neither before nor after. Now I realize that those were the moments of truly suspended judgment.
About 8 years ago I decided to make a radical change in my professional life. I switched from finance to photography and video but deep inside I was always imagining myself exploring further the ways of connecting to that state of a total creative freedom that allows you to transcend the limitations of one’s own perception of the reality and of the self into the field of the real creation. Along the way, I started wondering about the nature of the creative process. I was looking at it from an artistic point of view, but I was also curious about how, in general, ideas come to our mind. What makes a certain idea get born in a mind of a certain person? This wondering has brought me in the end to the International Center for Studies in Creativity.

My first encounter with CPS process was an exciting discovery. I had long believed that creativity was not only about arts, despite all my own artistic activities, and CPS provided a wonderful framework for applying creative attitude to real life situations and developing original solutions. The whole methodology seemed to do magic, while guiding you through different steps of a problem solving process, interchanging divergent and convergent thinking, constantly focusing your mind on opportunities instead of barriers. Situations that didn’t have a possible solution didn’t exist anymore. You just needed to have enough patience to follow through the process and be brave to suspend your judgment long enough. The concept of suspending judgment brought a huge relief of the pressure of having to deliver something solid and extraordinary at the same time, while working on a solution of a certain problem. Although I had been exploring the nature of creative trance in art for quite a long time already, combining my own process of creation with meditation, and diving into numerous esoteric traditions, the area of problem solving seemed to be different. There was always a weight that in the end you
had to deliver something that would respond to certain criteria. The principle of suspended judgment took this burden off my shoulders. I had permission to have stupid ideas, nonsense ideas, unrealistic ideas, ideas that would never work, basically because I would never know that they are such. Suspending judgment was adding the component of creative trance to problem solving, bringing it closer to artistic creation process.

The discovery of Creative Problem Solving was so exciting that I began teaching it to others even before I started my Master’s program studies at ICSC. Although sometimes the reaction of those with whom I was sharing CPS principles was positive, the main feedback often was that many people found it very difficult to actually suspend judgment. These were my own observations too. Very often after a session I had a feeling of disappointment. Although I was able to guide my clients through the process, there seemed to be little creativity in what we were doing. The majority of the participants of my sessions struggled with setting aside their habits of thinking and getting out of the comfort zone. Ideas rarely took an unexpected angle, and even when they did, people normally were finding it difficult to transform them into workable solutions, even using CPS tools. Creating connections between seemingly unrelated concepts felt out of the question. Warm up activities didn’t help too much. People could have fun and feeling quite at ease proposing out of the box ideas for a ridiculous challenge, but when the process turned into the questions of real life, the participants found themselves more invested in the problem. The burden of the responsibility for the solution often made it impossible for them to let it go, to let their imagination loose, or to let the ideas simply appear in their mind. Even if they were not afraid of being judged by the others, their own internal evaluation was blocking their thinking. And it is not a surprise. Our inner
critic is formed at the very early stages of our life together with our personality. Its only function is to protect us from being hurt, from pain and suffering, and it fulfills its function in the only way that this part of ourselves is familiar with. We have been living with our critic for our whole life and have been giving credit to its judgments without being aware of it. It is a strongly integrated habit of our neurology. So it seems rather naïve to expect that people will be able to suspend their judgment with a simple command.

I usually get very positive feedback from my clients. They often leave the sessions I facilitate excited and content, thanking me for helping them to discover new points of view or simply clarify their mind. However one of the persistent feelings I have after my session is that the group hadn’t really tapped into its real creative potential. Now, after two years of experience as creativity facilitator, I have it clear that CPS, with all my love for this methodology, doesn’t actually make anyone more creative. It offers a wonderful framework for applying one’s creativity potential to problem solving, but we need something else to help this potential to thrive. What I am looking for is to develop my own methodology that would integrate CPS with other, more holistic approaches, that would allow me to take my professional work to the next, deeper level, in my aspiration to help my clients to connect profoundly to their creative potential. I decided that my Master’s project could be a perfect start on this journey of exploration.
Section Two: Pertinent Literature

The Term

Before I begin with the vast field of pertinent literature, I want to clarify one thing. Alex Osborn originally used the term *deferring judgment* when he developed the rules of divergent thinking, as a basis of Creative Problem Solving (CPS) methodology (Osborn, 1993). So, throughout the whole literature related to CPS, this is the term that is used. To be honest, I don’t know where the term “suspending judgment” is coming from, however I have been using it for years as a substitute for “deferring judgment”. When I started working on this project and realized this terminology inconsistency of mine, I asked myself if there could be any conceptual differences between the two terms. And I have a feeling that the term *suspending judgment* is closer to the concept I have in mind and that I have described above. *Deferring judgment* seems to have more linear connotation, it really describes the cognitive process of consciously postponing one’s evaluation in the timeline: “I won’t evaluate this idea now, I will evaluate it later”.

*Suspending judgment*, on the other hand, allows more multidimensional approach to the phenomena. It is not only about what I do with the information I perceive, but also how I perceive it. It is about removing temporarily – suspending – the filters of one’s perception, which implies the work not only at cognitive level, but also at other levels of consciousness.

When in the beginning of my practice as a CPS facilitator many participants of my sessions brought up that they found it difficult to deal consciously with one’s own judgment, I started searching for ways how this process could be facilitated. Taking into account my confusion in terminology, I was searching for *suspending judgment*. And I
found a post in one blog, to which I can’t find the references any more, which described how the author, looking for ways to facilitate her own creative thinking, cut out the letters of the word *judgment* from paper and suspended them on strings above her desk, as a reminder of the importance of this attitude. At least it confirms that I am not the only one who uses the term, applying it to creative thinking. Since then I have my own word *judgment* suspended from the ceiling in my office.

Figure 1. Suspended *judgment* in my house (*juicio* means judgment in Spanish).

So, to bring clarity to the usage of terms, throughout this literature review I will be using the term *deferring judgment* every time I discuss sources related to the development of CPS methodology. However, at all other times throughout the project I will be using the term *suspending judgment* as it describes better the concept I actually want to work with.
CPS History

When Osborn (1993) introduced the concept of deferring judgment, he quoted Schiller who stated that evaluating ideas too soon "hinders creative work of the mind" (p. 127). This is the basic idea behind deferring judgment as a cornerstone of the CPS methodology, and it is maintained in practically its original state throughout the majority of literature dedicated to CPS:

- Deferring judgment is "separating imagination from judgment when generating ideas" (Firestien, 2004, p. 69).
- "To defer judgment means to hold evaluation until a later time" (Puccio et al., 2007, p. 63).

The postulate is if we allow ourselves to create ideas without evaluating them long enough, we maximize our chances to open up a maximum number of possibilities towards a potential solution. Parnes, Noller, and Biondi (1977) described it as the balance between prejudice, as evaluating something too soon based on limited information, and nojustice, as the opposite to prejudice. Puccio et al. (2007) stated that the principle of deferred judgment was the first one of all principles of CPS methodology to be tested empirically (p. 64). The study of Parnes and Meadow (as cited by Puccio et al., 2007, p. 64), and other studies, like for example, Brilhart and Jochem (1964), and Parnes (1961) demonstrated that ideation applying this principle renders more and better ideas.

The principle of deferring judgment is twofold. On the one hand, postponing evaluation of ideas in time allows a person to come up with more ideas, than one would do while evaluating at the same time with ideating. On the other hand, explicit prohibition of expressing one’s judgment makes it easier for people to share their ideas...
with others. Parnes (1967) cited the study of Parloff and Handlon (1964) that demonstrated that deferred judgment does not actually increase the generation of creative ideas but rather increases the willingness of a person to report ideas that he ordinarily might devaluate in his own mind (Parnes, 1967, p. 55). We will discuss later to what extent deferring judgment rule really helps one to feel safer expressing one’s ideas to the others. What is important here is that Parloff and Handlon findings ring the alarm that not everything is so clear about deferring the inner judgment.

Parnes et al. (1977) admitted that, when one ideates employing the principle of deferring judgment, one doesn't really defer all judgment. They used the term primary and secondary criteria. The primary criteria defines the boundary of the challenge, the secondary criteria is about whether the idea is good or bad. So they suggested that the deferring judgment principle implies applying the primary criteria while ideating, but deferring the application of the secondary criteria. Although from the cognitive process standpoint it probably might make sense and actually fits into the original conception of the deferred judgment principle, it also raises a big concern. Are we really sure that we are able so clearly to separate these two criteria in our mind? The bottom line of this two-criteria approach is (and my observations confirm it) that a person continues evaluating while ideating, and it hampers the potentiality of the creative process.

Parnes et al. (1977) suggested that "breakthrough ideas usually occur during states of consciousness other than the ordinary, fully rational state" (p. 185). To achieve these states we need to go beyond cognitive explanations. Just deferring partial evaluation till better time doesn’t break through the rational state of consciousness. What we actually need is to suspend judgment completely, to open up towards the acceptance of whatever
Beyond CPS

Although the principle of deferred judgment is inherent to CPS, of course it is not the only creative thinking model that considers the importance of this concept. E. Paul Torrance in his book *The Search for Satori and Creativity* (1979) described the creative skill *keep open* that is measured by the ability to resist premature closure. In Torrance and Ball (1984), *resistance to premature closure* is described as a “person's ability to keep open and delay closure long enough to make the mental leap that makes possible original ideas” (p. 39), which makes it closely related to the concept of deferring judgment. Basadur and Finkbeiner (1985) considered deferring judgment as a skill and avoiding premature closure as an attitude. McAra-McWilliam (2007) linked the term of resistance to premature closure to Keats’s term *negative capability* (Keats, 1970):

> This diffusing aspect of the creative process typically takes an inward focus in terms of reflecting and re-ordering half-formed ideas in an ever-growing suspension of “half-solutions”, as well as having an outward manifestation in sketch ideas, doodles, and other material forms. The ability at this stage to hold these glimpses and ‘half-ideas’ in a state of potential and deferred judgement in which more complex transformations can occur is what Keats called ‘negative capability’: ‘I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason.’ (p. 43).

Keats’s description of this capability of being in uncertainties without effecting a premature closure of the creative process is one of the defining
characteristics of the creative imagination. (p. 3)

I like to think that the idea of the skills of keeping open and resisting premature closure is closer to my conception of suspending judgment than to the original CPS interpretation of deferring judgment, as here we do not talk simply about displacing in time the moment of evaluation, but the attitude of being open to whatever comes and accepting it without attempting to emit any judgment regarding what is received.

Blocks to Creativity

At the cognitive level, the concept of deferring judgment seems very logical and clear. But although studies do suggest that applying this principle improves the results of the ideation process, my observations still indicate that it is also the part of the process people are struggling with the most. Parnes (1967) stated “Osborn's explanation of deferred judgment is deceptively simple.” “It is easy to understand intellectually, but extremely difficult to internalize” (p. 55). Why? What is the reason?

Osborn’s rationale for creating his brainstorming guidelines (Osborn, 1993) was that they help to deal with factors that block human creativity: fear to look foolish, timidity, and arrogance (high expectations of oneself) (p. 47). His idea was that explicit reinforcing of the rules, including deferred judgment principle, and encouraging creating ideas, would help to cultivate creativity. Parnes (1967) expressed the opinion that applying and reinforcing the rules of divergent thinking at a CPS session helps to create the safe environment that fosters “psychological freedom” (citing Carl Rogers, p. 66) through the following:

1. Accepting the individual as of unconditional worth...

2. Providing a climate in which external evaluation is absent...
3. Understanding empathically..." (p. 66).

Like this, according to Parnes (1967), CPS creativity training programs help people to overcome internal and external blocks to creativity. The study of Parloff and Handlon (1964), mentioned earlier, seems to confirm this hypothesis. However it seems to me that not everything is so simple.

Tumin (1992) exposed the theory that personal blocks to creativity are not determined by a simple fear of possible encounter with external negative judgment, but by potential threat to the social status. In our social order, a person must demonstrate to be useful to the society in order to be accepted by it. This makes our society "by its very nature... fundamentally hostile or at least indifferent to human creativity" (p. 107). Hence "capacity for and interest in one's creative self arises and is acted upon proportionate to the amount of status-assurance and security which the individual possess" (p. 107). First a person needs to re-assure one’s social status and ensure its security, only after that one may permit oneself being creative. This point of view posits a question whether it is possible at all, in a temporary set of a single CPS session, to create an environment safe enough that will be able to overcome the pressure of the social threats. According to my observations, even under conditions when ideas are encouraged and no negative judgment is expressed, people are still very self-conscious of all their actions and words.

Of course, to what extent each person would be susceptible to the pressures of the social status assurance will depend also on some individual factors. Scott (2002) expressed an idea that self-censorship (that is directly related to suspending judgment) is coming from low self-esteem: people are searching for reassurance from the others and that's why they may be reluctant to share certain ideas being afraid of negative judgment.
Scott stated that self-censorship might happen at cognitive and subconscious levels. I think, it is easy to deal with cognitive self-censorship via reinforcing CPS guidelines and positive feedback. However overcoming subconscious self-censorship might be a much more complicated endeavor. And here we are coming to the necessity of understanding better our subconscious and unconscious processes in order to be able to deal with our failure to suspend judgment.

**Penetrating the Human Nature**

In his search for the origins of the emotional blocks to creativity, Maslow (1992) expressed the idea that the main source of new discovery is unconsciousness. This is what he called *primary creativeness*. He said that psychotherapy releases creativeness because it connects us to our unconsciousness. However, according to him, the disconnectedness of the contemporary human being from the unconscious makes us perceive anything that is new as danger. As we are afraid of our unconscious, we are afraid of our creativity. Maslow referred to primary and secondary processes of psychoanalysis. Primary processes are unconscious processes of "perceiving world and thinking" (Maslow, 1992, p. 100). Secondary processes are the processes of logical thinking. When “‘secondary processes’ are walled off from the primary processes” (p. 100), both suffer. So the reason why our creativity is blocked is the disconnectedness of our cognitive thinking from our unconscious.

Maslow’s conception of primary creativeness and the disconnectedness between the cognitive and unconscious processes as the origin of blocks to creativity resonates a lot with the work of a brilliant, in my opinion, NLP and trance therapist, Stephen Gilligan. In his book *The courage to love* (Gilligan, 2008) he presented his concept of
somatic self and cognitive self. These are two types of energy that constitute human psyche: essen and fressen. The terms come from two German words: fressen, which means to eat like animal, and essen, which means to eat like human. Fressen energy is our animal energy, this is the energy of life flowing through our center. Fressen is our somatic self. Essen energy is the energy of our intellectual, cognitive, conscious mind - cognitive self. When two are disconnected - the person is disbalanced. The connection between the two creates personal generative field - the relational self. This relational self represents the whole person. Only through the relational self one may connect to one’s center – the core of each person, that some might call essence, others – soul, others inner self. Being in the relational self, as well as experiencing the connection with one’s center has nothing to do with cognitive mind. It is more an emotional body-mind sensation. The whole person, through one’s relational self, is connected fully with the life flow, and is able to create new things out of generative field. This is the flow experience that allows art expression - expression of life flowing through the center of the relational self.

Linking the work of Gilligan with the work of Maslow, we may say that overcoming creative blocks require connecting our conscious and unconscious processes, our cognitive and somatic selves. Gilligan’s concept of relational self manifests the very essence of creativity as the union of two apparently unrelated truths, like yin and yang. Judgment is manifestation of our cognitive self. When we have problems with suspending judgment apparently it might mean that our cognitive self is disconnected from our somatic self. When the union occurs, we enter the state that Gilligan compared to the concept of satyagraha, introduced by Gandhi, which represents the strength on non-violence. It means that the state of suspended judgment is the state of acceptance.
Gilligan liked using the comparison with aikido, where the main principle is exactly flowing with the energy of the other. So the main principle of suspending judgment through relational self is letting life flow through your center. To be able to do it we need to learn to trust this non-cognitive part of our self that is hidden deep inside of us.

When you let life flow through you, and connect to your center and you are conscious of the body-mind sensations, you may become aware of the resonances of the field in your body. Through these resonances you establish the connection between your center and the center of the other. It creates common generative field, this field facilitates that communication flows too, that it emerges between the center and the center. It doesn't happen only at intellectual level, but at both somatic-cognitive levels, allowing something new to emerge. This is generative creative process.

**Suspending Judgment and Intuition**

In her research of the role of intuition in CPS process Cyndi Burnett (Burnett, 2010) established the link between the concept of deferred judgment and intuition. According to her model, deferring judgment is a part of open attitude, which, in turn, together with *deliberate awareness*, is a requirement for *mindfulness*, which, in its turn, is a necessary component of intuition. Describing the concept of deliberate awareness, she stated:

> In order to be deliberately aware, we also must be connected and in the present with our internal and external world. We may connect to our inner world by listening to ourselves, and the inner voice telling us what should be done. We may connect with our external world by being sensitive to the environment. To be sensitive to the environment, we need to be aware of the emotional state and non-verbal cues from other people involved, as well as judge the overall energy of the physical and psychological environment of the situation. (p. 129)

It seems to me that this description aligns with the Gilligan’s concept of the
generative state and confirms its relationship to suspending judgment. Although Burnett (2010) indicated in her research that there are many quite different approaches to defining the nature of intuition, the definition of Myers and Ray (1986) of intuition as “direct knowing without conscious reasoning” (p. 8), resonates with conception of suspending judgment as allowing emergence of ideas, or thoughts, without letting the cognitive process of judgment to intervene.

Burnett’s research also pointed to the link between intuition and incubation process. Parnes et al. (1977) also explained the relationship between incubation and deferring judgment by stating that deferred judgment gives more time for "obtaining variety of perceptions" (p. 20). Establishing these connections between suspended judgment, intuition and incubation provides certain directions I could explore in my project, while looking for ways of facilitating suspending judgment.

**Trance, Art and Creativity**

The main obstacle I see in our journey towards suspended judgment is that it is rather difficult to suspend something one is not aware of. Stone and Stone (1989) developed their voice-dialog methodology based on the theory of multiple personalities. The main idea of this theory is that each person doesn’t have just one personality, but one’s personality is split between different sub-personalities. Each sub-personality has its own character, function, way of manifesting itself, etc. Some of these characters have certain relationships and interactions; some may be not aware one of another and act completely independently. Some of these sub-personalities are archetypical, others develop from one’s individual circumstances. One of those archetypical characters is inner critic. In their work *Embracing Your Inner Critic: Turning Self-Criticism Into a*
**Creative Asset** (Stone and Stone, 1993) the authors considered in detail the process of how our inner critic gets its form, how it functions, and in what ways we could turn its existence into our asset. The thing is the inner critic was born shortly after we were born; it was formed together with our personality, with our ego. It is that inner voice that is constantly evaluating in our head everything that we are doing. Its function is to protect us from being hurt. This voice has been present in our mind for our whole life, and we are so used to its presence that we just ceased being aware of it. So, how can we stop something if we are not aware that it’s there? Dealing with inner critic and its transformation is a long path of developing self-awareness and the habits of self-observation. It is not something one can learn in two hours of a CPS session.

This dilemma represents the main challenge I was confronted with in this project. Sometimes it seemed that I was looking for something that simply could not exist by its nature. That is why one of the areas of my exploration is related to the ways of facilitating creative trance. I believe that trance could be a possible solution to my challenge. My interest in creative trance is originated from my experience with NLP. I have been able to observe the work of great maestros in the area of NLP, and I know that well induced trance facilitates work with the subconscious at surprising levels. Stephen Gilligan, who is considered as one of the greatest specialists of trance and Eriksonian hypnosis, relates to great extent the generative state associated with relational self to the state of trance (Gilligan, 2008). Bowers (1967) presented the study, often referenced by creativity researchers, that demonstrated that subjects who were induced under hypnosis to suspend their judgment, performed better in creativity tests afterwards. Of course, I won’t pretend to self-learn hypnosis in one month, but I think that exploring the nature of
trance could be an interesting source of inspiration.

Gowan in his work *Trance, Art and Creativity* (1975) presented the concept of *numenous element*, which is his more neutral way of referring to collective unconscious. "The central business of life is contact of the individual ego with the numinous element" (p. 19). This process goes through three stages. The first stage, *protaxic* – the stage of *trance*, implies the loss of ego, and includes experiences as trance, hypnotism, and automatic writing. The second stage – *art, parataxic*, - is characterized by “production of images whose meaning is not clear or categorical” (p. 20). This is the stage of archetypes, dreams and art. The final, the most advanced stage – *creativity* – represents *syntaxic* experiences “where meaning is more or less fully cognized symbolically, with ego present” (p. 20). This stage evolves through creativity to meditation to the state of *satori*. This model resonates with my view on creativity, which I presented earlier, and it is probable that the journey towards suspended judgment lies through the same stages.

**Selected Project Bibliography**

In this bibliography I provide the list of sources I have cited in the literature review and some others that are relevant to the topic. I grouped them in accordance with the chapters of this section, and added two more groups: one for neuroscience, and another one for techniques. The *Techniques* group contains various sources on creativity enhancement and personal development. They are not related to suspending judgment exactly, but could serve as a good fountain of inspiration.

**CPS History and other creative thinking methods**


**Psychology and Blocks to Creativity**


**Intuition**


Trance, Art and Creativity


Neuroscience


Techniques


Section Three: Process Plan

Before It Started

One of my original ideas for this project was to possibly integrate some findings from another research project that I am running with a friend of mine, who is an art-therapist. We are looking for ways of integrating CPS with art-therapy approach, specifically how art-therapy could help the participants with suspending judgment. Our partnership had started several months ago and had been intensive work on understanding the nature of creative process from the points of view of CPS and art-therapy, and how we could bring together these two disciplines. From the very beginning of our work, I had a hunch that facilitating the ability of suspending judgment is the most important area where art-therapy could enhance a CPS cognitive process. We have elaborated an intervention proposal to try the results of our discussions in an enterprise context. My initial intention was to be able to complete this trial within the timeline of this project, but given the time restrictions we could only finalize our conceptual findings, which I will present our conceptual findings in the section four.

In Search of My Own Center

Taking into account that one of my goals was to develop the skills of a facilitator of creative trance, I needed to work on my own ability of creating my personal generative state, and using it in my work with others. My intention was to practice maintaining a generative state on a regular basis in my communication with other people, paying attention to the resonance with the fields of the others, and observing how it affects the quality of my communication and interactions. This part of the process did not go so well. It so happened that right at the same time I had to deal with some personal issues,
and I found it rather difficult to be present and centered many times when it was needed for the sake of the project. I think I was experiencing in myself the same resistance that people find regarding suspending judgment: we are so used to our patterns of automatic behavior that it is very difficult to become conscious and change it at once. In the end I came to the conclusion that the process I wanted to go through within the timeframe of the project can’t be squeezed in such a short period of time. I will elaborate on this in more details in section five.

**CPS Process: Gathering the Data and Incubating**

Throughout the work on my project I realized that the problem I was trying to solve was actually a CPS challenge. So I will describe my work following this process. When I started working, I had a very clear vision of where I wanted to go. First, I started exploring the data by reviewing literature sources and found lots of inspiration. On the other hand, I also felt as if I needed some experiential data to be able to comprehend better the nature of the problem. What was the actual process of suspended judgment? How did it work? I felt I needed to experience it fully on myself in order to be able to learn to facilitate it in others. I liked the idea of the essence of science in trying to assimilate the nature of this reality (Bohm and Peat, 2010). Another way of grasping the nature of the reality is meditation (Horan, 2009; Wallace, 2009). In this way meditation could be considered as a scientific method of exploration. So I adapted my meditation practice as a way of personal exploration of the process of suspending judgment, specifically, its intuitive, unconscious and incubation component. During one month, on a daily basis, I tried to use my meditation, not only as a means to develop my own mindfulness and the skill of self-observation, which in turn facilitates the ability to
suspend judgment, but also as creative contemplation (Horan, 2009), providing the conditions for incubation and insight process. I also exercised automatic writing and Image Streaming (Wenger, 1996) on a daily basis. Normally I practiced Image Streaming or automatic writing for half an hour in the morning, and did a half-a-hour mediation in the afternoon. After each session I took a note of my insights, which I registered in a journal I kept also on a daily basis. I used these techniques for a double purpose: first to facilitate my incubation on the nature of the challenge, and second as a way of observing my own suspending judgment process.

**CPS Process: Formulating the Challenge**

My practice with these techniques, together with the month of exploring the literature brought me to the realization that my search was actually a CPS challenge. The first month of the project was the period of data gathering. My daily practice facilitated my incubation process. Then it was time to clarify the formulation of the challenge.
In Figure 2 you may see the Ladder of Abstraction I worked on. In green I highlighted the challenges I decided to pursue further. You can find the full size of this Ladder of Abstraction in Appendix A.

The challenges I decided to explore further are:

1. What are all the ways to suspend one’s own judgment?
2. What are all the techniques one may use to train oneself to suspend judgment?
3. How to help people feel psychologically safe at my sessions?
4. How to stimulate people’s intrinsic motivation to be creative?
5. How to fit somatic experience into a CPS session?
6. What are all the ways one can get oneself into a creative trance?
7. What are all the ways we could stimulate activation of certain brain waves?
I obviously couldn’t work on all these challenges; the time frame of the project didn’t allow it. But I intuitively felt that solving the question of intrinsic motivation would work in favor of psychological safety. The topic of creative trance was closely related to the topic of brain waves. And it would be logical to think that if I worked on those three major areas, it would give me plenty of ideas to address the first two, the most general challenges – what are all the ways and techniques to suspend one’s judgment.

CPS Process: Exploring Ideas and Prototyping Solutions

One of the results of my daily practice exercises was an idea of arranging a pilot group, to try out different techniques I might come up with. I organized a group of friends. Eight people initially agreed to try my exercises and give me their feedback, but the actual number of participants varied each week. They were all familiar to a certain extent with CPS, which made our collaboration easier for me. My plan was to work with them for five weeks, sending an exercise per week by email and asking to return the feedback by the end of the week. I wanted to use the first week to get initial understanding of the level of ideational fluency and ability to suspend judgment the members of the group had. Then I would use four following weeks to try four different exercises.

I did want to include design of some exercises that would allow connecting to the unconscious, as this area was my first choice when I started thinking on the topic of suspending judgment long time ago. My personal practice experience was a good base to back up the exercises I would propose. So I had the topic for the first week of trials, and three challenges to explore each week afterwards. My plan was to research additional
literature on each subject and ideate different options to resolve each challenge. I would try my exercises first on myself before choosing one or two to send to the pilot group.

**Suspending Judgment Means Acceptance**

In my personal practice of connecting to the unconscious exercises and meditation, as I have described it above, one insight came up several times. It was an idea that suspending judgment is equal to *equanimity*. This concept is used in *Vipassana* meditation to describe impartial observation, without creating any positive or negative emotions towards the object that is being observed. In some other sources I also came up with the comparison of the state of the creative trance to the state of meditation. And when I was reading feedback from the members of the pilot group how frustrated they felt every time they observed judgment in their thought process, it came to my mind that I could use this parallel between meditation and suspending judgment. Meditation, despite general misconception, is not about *not having thoughts*. The approach is totally the opposite. It is based on accepting one’s thoughts through observing them impartially. So it seemed that the solution to suspending judgment was quite obvious: one had to accept one’s judgment.

As this approach seemed very close to creating the inner space of psychological safety, I decided to combine the accepting judgment solution with ideas for the challenge of intrinsic motivation. Here I had the second topic for piloting with the group.

**Cognitive vs. Uncognitive**

It so happened that right when I started working on this project, I was concluding a facilitation project with a client. I wasn’t very happy about how our last session went, and my main concern was about how I could facilitate idea elaboration in a better way.
At the same time, I observed that most of the judgmental thoughts the participants of my pilot group were reporting were related to their concern about feasibility or relevance of their ideas. So I thought that maybe if they knew how to elaborate ideas better, it would diminish the related judgment thoughts. Taking into account that I also felt that burning concern about idea elaboration, coming from my last CPS session with a client, I decided to make it the center of my third exercise I would try with the pilot group. This decision was not an easy one, as my initial focus really directed to non-cognitive solutions. But somehow changing direction in this way felt right, and my project advisor assured me that it was acceptable too.

Brain Entrainment

I really felt much curiosity in respect to the possibility of inducing certain brain waves states and facilitating creative trance this way. Initially this interest was caused by what I had heard about Hemi-Sync technology (http://www.hemi-sync.com/) that is claimed to be able to provoke particular brain states through music. In my literature search I discovered the term brain entrainment, which stands exactly for inducing certain waves in the brain via audio or visual stimuli. Curiously enough, a friend of mine, who is a sound engineer, had started investigating this topic just recently. So we set up on this journey together, searching for possible ways to use this technique in my project. The main conclusion I came to in the end is that although brain entrainment techniques did have wide scientific research back up, they did not seem to be the most appropriate for a CPS session environment. I mostly was interested in audio stimuli, and based on my own experience most of the sounds that are used for entrainment might be rather disturbing.
Besides most of the techniques require headphones, which are not appropriate in a group session.

**CPS and Music**

The topic of brain entrainment is closely related to the impact music may have on our psychological state, and hence on mental state too. Inspired by Ned Hermann’s account regarding the usage of music in his Applied Creative Thinking workshops (Herrmann, 1992), I had had long lasted interest in the topic. And I thought it was perfect timing to dive deeper into it while working on my project. I worked with another friend, who is a music therapist, to explore the possibilities of using music to facilitate suspending judgment. Our main conclusion was that the usage of music in therapy is very individual. In other words, a therapist works with that particular person and his or her personal reaction to a certain musical piece, but there are no general rules what kind of music would provoke what state in different people.

I also researched in literature the so-called “Mozart effect” (Steele, Bass, & Crook, 1999); Thompson, Schellenberg, & Husain, 2001), that stands for supposed improvement of intelligent capacities caused by Mozart music. Highly popularized, this theory did not find conclusive support in scientific research. Once again the main conclusion I came to was that our reaction to music is very personal (Lesiuk, 2010), hence it is difficult to use it in general way trying to produce certain mental state in a group of people.

**Trance and Dance**

Worried about my failure to find an insightful way to facilitate suspending judgment through any brain entrainment techniques, I re-directed my attention to another
challenge that I initially selected at the Formulating the Challenge stage: how to fit somatic experience into a CPS session? I do think working with body could be a very interesting addition to CPS process. I had already tried using various dancing and other somatic experience techniques in my sessions with varying results, so I tried to induce trance in myself through dancing to use this experience as a vehicle to ideate a solution for an exercise. I was dancing for a week without much promising results: my conscious mind was very much present at all time. At the same time, in my continuous literature exploration I came across a very interesting thesis (Turow, 2005) that analyzed the links between trance and rituals. This work inspired me to what I later evaluated as the best exercise of the project. Turow found that the trance effect depended much on the personal meaning the participant of the trance ceremony ascribed to the ritual. So I thought that probably what I need to do is let people create their own ritual that would have a personal meaning for them and would help them enter into a creative state.

**CPS Process: Exploring Acceptance and Elaborating an Action Plan**

In section four I describe the results of the trials of the exercises I developed with the pilot group. In section five you will find my learnings from the feedback I received from the participants and from my personal experience. Finally, I will elaborate on my next steps I will take, based on the whole process I have gone through while working on this project.
Project Timeline

The following timeline summarizes the schedule of my work on the project and the estimation of the dedicated hours.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>JANUARY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>- Edit the draft of the Concept Paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Submit the draft of the Concept Paper to SBP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Revise the Concept paper based on SBP’s feedback</td>
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<td>- Submit the Draft to the project advisor</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>FEBRUARY</strong></td>
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<td>- Finalize the Concept Paper based on project advisor’s feedback</td>
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<td>- Submit the final version of the Concept Paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Initial search for pertinent academic literature</td>
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<td>- Reading</td>
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<td>- Search for projects that might be interesting to me in Digital Commons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Choose a project for Adopt a Project review</td>
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<td>- Continued search for pertinent literature</td>
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<td>- Reading</td>
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<td>- Daily diary and personal practice</td>
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<td>Feb 26</td>
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<td>- Comment on Adopt a Project reviews</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Start working on the Draft of the sections 1-3</td>
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<td>- Reading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Daily diary and personal practice</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Ideation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Daily diary and personal practice</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Daily diary and personal practice</td>
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<td><strong>MAY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
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Section Four: Outcomes

Outcomes Overview

When I started working on this project, I didn’t have a clear idea of what might come out of it. Yes, I had an intention to develop my own approach to facilitating CPS and to learn the skills of facilitating creative trance. However, I also was totally aware that this project was just the beginning of a long journey of exploration and discoveries. And as such, it hasn’t rendered that much in terms of tangible results, but rather highlighted some directions I want to pursue. The odyssey ahead of me is so long and the territory to explore is so vast, that my work in these two months couldn’t even begin to narrow down the areas of further research, it just gave me some hints of what doors it might be worthwhile to open next. So the main outcomes of this project are my learnings from my search, personal inquiries and practice, and my work with my pilot group during the last two months. I will talk about my learnings in more detail in section five. Here I will present the description of the suspended judgment exercises I designed and tried out with my pilot group and the feedback I have received from the participants. I will also explain the proposal of an experimental program called Creative Ecosystem that combines CPS with art-therapy, and that is the result of my collaboration with an art-therapist. This collaboration began before I started the work on my project, and it was the initiation of my search for ways to help people to suspend judgment during a CPS session and the main inspiration for my project. I will describe our work proposal, which is the result of many hours of discussions with my partner about the nature of creativity and creative process, and how connecting to one’s creative potential through art-
therapeutic process may make it easier for a person to learn suspending judgment during deliberate creative thinking.

Creative Ecosystem Work Proposal

Introduction to the Work Proposal

Creative Ecosystem work proposal is one of the outcomes of my search for more holistic approaches towards fostering a creative potential of an organization, which in great part, was driven by my interest in methods of better facilitation of suspended judgment. It is a result of my collaboration with a close friend who is an art-therapist. Initially we were looking at ways of combining art-therapy with CPS in order to offer new creativity services to organizations. Very soon after our collaboration, I began to realize that art-therapy has a potential of helping people to enter that state of suspended judgment I was looking for at my CPS sessions.

The approach of our proposal is based on the premise that ensuring effective development of innovative capabilities of an organization requires interventions at different levels:

- Person: tapping into and developing creative potential of each individual within an organization.

  Being creative means being capable of generating multiple points of view, new interactions and relations between different elements of existing knowledge. At the same time it implies the ability to believe in oneself, communicate new ideas, and dare to try new things without fear of failure. For that a person needs to feel good about oneself and ones’ environment – both personal and professional – and to have access to resources that
would help one facing the life challenges and maintain healthy self-esteem. (Ferreros & Mishina, 2012, p. 5)

• Process: once a person has tapped into and connected to one’s own creative potential, one would need tools and techniques that would help the person to apply this personal creativity to “tasks, processes and interactions” (p. 5) in the work environment. CPS methodology has a crucial role in this process as its function is exactly in providing a practical application to individual creative capabilities, especially in the context of innovation.

• System: when any organization aims at enhancing its capabilities to innovate, it must ensure that its corporate culture and climate are favorable to creative and innovative behavior. No efforts to enhance individual creative potential and foster creative thinking skills will render required results without an appropriate creative climate in place. In order to create a corporate environment favorable to creativity and innovation, an organization needs to make systemic changes in its way of functioning: at the level of corporate structure and hierarchy, decision making procedures and corporate communication.

Our work proposal considers an organization an ecosystem, within which any change introduced at any of the levels described above will trigger changes at all levels. Hence developing organization’s innovative capabilities requires coordinated interventions at all three levels as a systemic approach. We propose to use art-therapy as the main vehicle of developing personal creative potential of the members of an organization. Creative Problem Solving represents a perfect framework that would allow people within the organization to apply their creative
skills to working processes and corporate interactions to ensure higher probability of getting innovative results. Interventions at the systemic level would involve changes in the area of organizational development and would require change management control.

Combining Creative Problem Solving and Art-therapy

Art-therapy uses artistic languages, such as painting, sculpture, dance, music, theatre, literature, etc., as means of facilitating therapeutic process. Its aim is to trigger and aid personal transformation through helping a person to connect to one’s creative core. As the name suggests, it is used mostly in therapeutic contexts, and the examples of its application in business environments are really sparse. However we believe that an art-therapeutic approach may bring positive results when used in a corporate context. Some positive effects of art-therapeutic interventions with individuals and groups include:

- Improving Emotional Intelligence skills;
- Stress release;
- Developing important creative skills like flexibility, playful attitude, tolerance to risk and ambiguity; curiosity; sensitivity to external stimulus and search for novelty;
- Improving teamwork abilities:
- Diminishing internal fears;
- Releasing creative blocks.

Having observed these positive outcomes of art-therapy interventions leads us to believe that introducing elements of art-therapy into a Creative Problem Solving context
would allow CPS sessions participants to achieve more creative freedom and overcome
creative blocks that the mostly cognitive approach of CPS methodology doesn’t allow
participants to obtain, as it was discussed earlier in sections one and two. The idea is that
having gone through an art-therapeutic process would allow individuals to suspend
judgment better when they are working on practical application of their creative skills to
their work-related challenges.

**Intervention Proposal**

The following proposal has been elaborated in order to try on practice the
effectiveness of the combination of CPS with art-therapy and the effects of art-therapy
interventions on the participants’ ability to suspend judgment.

The intervention plan consists in 17 sessions that should be realized within the
framework of maximum 3 months with the same group that seeks to improve innovative
capabilities:

- Session 1. Initial situation assessment interview and current creative climate
evaluation.
- Session 2. Exploring the Vision CPS session – 4 hours.
- Session 3. Formulating Challenges CPS session – 4 hours.
- Sessions 4-13. Art-therapy sessions realized on a daily basis during two weeks – 2
  hours each session. This is the crucial part of the intervention as it is at these
  sessions the participants will start the journey of unblocking their deep creative
  potential.
- Session 15. Elaborating Ideas CPS session – 4 hours.

Session 17. Final evaluation and presenting results.

Carrying out the block of art-therapy sessions in the middle of the CPS process would allow us to evaluate any impact the art-therapy would have on participants’ internal blocks and their ability to suspend judgment.

We have been looking for companies that would volunteer to participate in our pilot program. The proposal has been presented to several corporate candidates. Although the general interest and curiosity prevail in the initial reaction, companies also share concern regarding the time that they need to invest in this program. We strongly believe that integrating elements of art-therapy into CPS could be very beneficial to the level of the creative results of the process. So we still need to figure out how to adjust the program we have elaborated to make it more acceptable by our potential target.

**Developing Suspending Judgment Exercises**

Here I will present the exercises I came up with during my work on the project and the feedback I have received from the members of the pilot group that kindly agreed to try my inventions on themselves. The group consisted of eight people who had had already varied experience with CPS before. The trials lasted 5 weeks and were performed at a distance. Every week I was sending to the group the description of an exercise and by the end of the week they submitted their impressions back to me.

**How We Worked**

All trials were designed following the same pattern, with some minor variations. Taking into account that the CPS step, where suspending judgment skill is the most
important, is ideation, I wanted to see if my exercises helped people to create better and more original ideas. Each week I asked my pilot group members to formulate a challenge and to dedicate ten minutes to initial ideation, aiming at coming up with twenty ideas, if possible. After the first round of ideation, they had to follow my instructions to perform a suspending judgment exercise. After that they had to ideate on the same challenge for the second time, again being asked to come up with twenty ideas in ten minutes. In figures 3, 4, and 5 you may find examples of the layout of the Spanish instructions I was sending to the group, and the format in which they were providing feedback. In Appendices B, C, D, E, and F you can find detailed English translation of the instructions of suspending judgment exercises we worked with.

I thought it would be interesting to see how their own perception of their ideas would change after completing the suspending judgment exercise. So I asked them to rate their ideas on the scale from 0 to 10 according to the following criteria:

• Do I like it?
• Is it original?
• Is it feasible?
• Is it relevant?

In the end of each trial I asked the participants to write up their observations regarding what they felt during ideation in respect to suspending judgment, what were their sensations while completing the exercise, and if they noticed any difference in ideation before and after the exercise.

I found it interesting to compare the impressions, the participants shared with me, with their opinions about their own ideas. I expected that if the suspending judgment
exercise worked as I planned, people would create more original ideas in the second round. It also would be logical if the increase in originality would be accompanied by some decrease in feasibility and relevance. The rationale behind this is that as people learn to suspend judgment, it should be easier for them a) to generate ideas, b) to accept more original ideas and ideas that don’t seem initially feasible or relevant. We will see below that the majority of the exercises did not work out exactly as I expected.

Nevertheless I do find the results of these trials interesting and curious, and I will explain in the section five what I have learned from them.

Figure 3. Example of instructions sent out to the pilot group
The First Encounter

During the first week I wanted to get an initial understanding where each member of the pilot group was standing in terms of ability to suspend judgment and general ideation skills. I also wanted to explore their somatic sensations related to ideation
process, creative blocks and the state of suspended judgment. My hope was to be able to
use this information as a source of inspiration for my exercises. The participants had to
formulate a real challenge related to a difficult situation each one was facing and go
through three cycles of ideation, using three different ideation techniques: standard
brainstorming, forced connections, and “Portable Think Tank”, where a person needs to
imagine how his/her heroes would solve the problem (The International Center for
Studies in Creativity, 2009). The requirement of each round was to think up twenty ideas
in ten minutes. After ideation, the participants were asked to write up their observations
about how they felt regarding suspending judgment during the exercise, if they were
aware of their judgments, what kind of blocks they noticed, and what sensations they felt
in the body.

The initial feedback provided very useful information to me. The majority of the
participants reported that they didn’t have any difficulties suspending judgment, and only
one admitted having experienced troubles with it. Curiously enough, however, all of them
accepted being aware of the judgments that were appearing throughout the process.
Those varied between three major blocks:

• Relevance: “What does it have to do with my challenge?”

• Feasibility: “Will it work?”

• Feeling blocked: “I can’t think of anything”, “Nothing comes to my mind”,
  “Twenty ideas is too much”.

I wanted to see what ideation technique each person found the most difficult. My
plan was to ask everyone to use this specific, the most difficult for this person, technique
in each consequent exercise. My hope was that by adding this extra pressure I could
ensure that people would demonstrate all their hidden blocks. The preferences varied. About half of the group admitted having more difficulties with Forced Connections technique, while some found the Portable Think Tank more difficult. Almost all of them found the standard brainstorming to be the easiest approach to creating ideas. However I didn’t pursue the idea of assigning to each participant any specific technique for ideation during the trials, as it would make the whole organization process more difficult for me.

Figure 6. Example of a completed initial exercise

Descriptions of body sensations participants felt while feeling blocked and when they were able to suspend judgment, were very interesting and quite revealing. When
feeling blocked, people observed rigidity in the body, pressure in the abdominal area or the perception of encountering oneself in a white empty space. Some participants also admitted feeling negative emotions, like anguish, pressure, stress and feeling bad about one-self, a low self-esteem. On the contrary, the state of suspended judgment was associated with loosing awareness of the body, a feeling of suspension in the air or floating in a “dreams-like liquid”.

**The Second Encounter: Exercise Connecting to the Unconscious**

The purpose of the first exercise was to use some intuitive techniques that normally allow us to connect to the unconscious or the sub-conscious and obtain intuitive responses to a proposed inquiry. Performing these exercises is often associated with the state of openness and letting go, and my idea was to see if participants were able to transpose the general feeling and attitude of the intuitive exercise to the subsequent round of ideation.

The suspending judgment practice started with a centering exercise. These types of techniques may be found somewhat similar to the meditation, although their primary purpose is to establish the connection to the center of one’s being. Consequently, I proposed three intuitive exercises to the participants, and offered them to choose one:

1. **Automatic writing** – to write down whatever comes to the mind, without
   separating a pen from the paper for ten minutes.

2. **Doodling** – drawing without thinking. This exercise is like automatic writing, but without having to express the inputs in words. The instructions were to let the pen draw on itself.
3. Image Streaming (Wenger, 1996) – this technique consists in describing mental images that appear in one’s mind, once again without any censorship and conscious evaluation. The proper execution of this exercise requires a partner or a voice-recording device.

I was especially interested in seeing what body sensation a person may experience while using these kinds of intuitive techniques. I asked the pilot group to pay special attention to this aspect and to try to transpose these sensations to the ideation part that followed.

Curiously enough, all participants who were able to complete this trial chose doodling exercise out of the proposed three, although it is probably not surprising, as this task seems to be the easiest to execute and the least demanding.

The descriptions of body sensations during the suspending judgment exercises varied. One participant reported more acute awareness of the body. Some observed happy, pleasant emotions and feeling playful like a child. One participant’s comments were rather contradictory, as, on one hand, he described certain difficulties and blockages at the moment of completing suspending judgment exercises, and at the same he reported feeling relaxed. One observation was rather curious, as the participant found that doodling exercise had a therapeutic effect on him and helped him to overcome certain negative emotions that were overwhelming him.

The observations of the group in respect to their impressions during ideation before and after the suspending judgment exercise seemed to me encouraging. All participants observed differences between the first and the second round of ideation. Some found themselves more relaxed and the process more fluid. Some people observed that after centering and doodling exercises they were coming up with more meaningful
and more personal ideas. One participant reported that the therapeutic effect of doodling allowed him to look at the challenge from a different perspective. He called this effect “suspending personality”. These observations were telling me that my exercise worked.

Nevertheless the effect of the exercise was not that apparent when I looked at the participants rating of their ideas. Some people even generated fewer ideas in the second round. Only one participant felt that his ideas were more original after the suspending judgment exercise, and one liked her ideas in the second round a little bit more. So, something was going on here. On the one hand, it did seem that the exercise helped people to enter that state of openness I had associated with suspended judgment, and according to their observations, this state somehow remained when they had to create ideas. However it didn’t help them to be more creative. Does it mean that suspending judgment is not that key I am looking for? One of the participants expressed an opinion that although the exercise didn’t help to create more original ideas, it helped to make them more meaningful and elegant, which is probably even more important than originality.

**The Third Encounter: Exercise Accepting Your Inner Critic**

The second exercise was about observing one’s judgments and integrating the critical and the creative parts of oneself together. The difficulty of this trial consisted in the fact that the participants had to perform certain exercises that usually are performed under the guidance of a facilitator. In the Appendix B you may find the detailed instructions they were given. Luckily most of the members of the group admitted their familiarity with similar activities and suggested that it made the execution of the instructions easier.
During the exercise several people made interesting discoveries about themselves. Some recognized voices of real people from their environment in their own judgments. Some discovered that even the critical part of their personality has its positive intentions and hence there is no point in feeling frustrated about having judgment. They were amazed how our perception of things may change depending on from what position they are looking at them.

All group members felt that it was much easier to defer judgment after this exercise. Judgments did appear in the second round, but it was much easier for people to postpone them until later. I personally remember myself being in the state of the flow, while ideating on a challenge that had seemed to me rather ridiculous before I completed the suspending judgment exercise.

It is interesting to observe, however, how sometimes we have difficulties to recognize certain aspects of our behavior when we are so used to them. One participant had difficulty observing his inner critic, saying that it was difficult for him to have an outside look at himself. At the same time, when describing his feeling about ideation, he claimed that he didn’t experience any problems with suspending judgment, but he was struggling with coming up with ideas because his challenge had limited options for
solution. It sounded to me that there were certain blocks that prevented the free flow of ideas, but the person was not aware of them, and blamed on the nature of the problem.

Another interesting observation was related to self-esteem. One person did feel that after the exercise it was easier to suspend judgment, but he continued experiencing blocks and frustration that he related to his low self-esteem.

Once again, however, the good feelings about coping better with deferring judgment did not correspond to how people rated their ideas. Although some participants did like their ideas more in the second round, and found them more original, others generated fewer ideas in the second round and liked them less. Inspired, on the one hand, by observations regarding the exercise and the ability to defer judgment after it, but somehow puzzled by the fact that ideas didn’t seem to improve after the suspending judgment exercise, I continued asking myself if I was really on the right track in my search. In this respect, I had high hopes for my next invention, the exercise that was designed to teach people to elaborate ideas.

**The Forth Encounter: Ideas Elaboration Exercises**

My idea behind developing these exercises was the thought that if people knew how they would be able to transform their ideas into workable solutions it would be easier for them to accept ideas that don’t seem feasible or relevant at the first glance. It was coming from the observation that the majority of judgmental thoughts people reported about were related to the evaluation of ideas’ relevance or feasibility. People get frustrated when they can’t make sense of what comes to their mind, especially when they are trying to find a solution to a situation they are emotionally invested in.
The suspending judgment part of the trial consisted of two exercises that aimed at helping the participants to develop the skills of making connections and elaborating ideas. The first exercise consisted in thinking up various connections for three pairs of unrelated words, like yoyo – conservation, gravitate – plug, ticket – spectrometer. I decided that we need this skill when we use ideation techniques like Forced Connections. The easier it is for people to establish uncommon connections, the less frustrated they feel when certain ideas, which seem to them weird, come to their mind. The more we practice this skill, the less related judgments appear during the ideation process, as irrelevant ideas get connected automatically by our mind to the challenge, and the idea gets transformed.

Figure 8. Connecting irrelevant concepts exercise – example of instructions.
The second exercise guided the participants step by step through the process of a transformation of an idea. The process consisted of two parts, one – for an irrelevant idea, and another one – for an idea that was evaluated as not feasible. My instructions were based on the principle of PPCO technique (Firestien, 2004; Puccio et al., 2007), that first considers all positive features of an idea, then looks at potentials it may lead to in the future, and finally addresses the concerns related to the idea by stating them as challenges and ideating possible ways to overcoming them I adapted it to make it easier for people (as it seemed to me) to follow the process of the transformation of an idea. The cornerstone of the exercise was identifying the essence of an idea and connecting it (using the skill practiced in the previous exercise) to the challenge to make an idea more relevant. In the case of a not feasible idea, additional steps required identifying concerns related to the idea, formulating concerns like challenges, searching for ideas to resolve the concerns and connecting these ideas to the positive essence of the idea. In the end of the transformation the person had to evaluate the new idea that was obtained in the process, so I could see if the exercise was able to improve the idea successfully. You will find step-by-step instructions in the Appendix C.

This time I added one more step to the whole procedure. I asked the group to rate again the feasibility of the ideas created in the first round, after they would have completed the second round of ideation. I wanted to see if having gone through an idea elaboration exercise would change people’s perception of what was feasible and what was not. I am glad to report that all participants found their ideas they had created in the first round more achievable.
Despite the encouraging fact I have described above, I think this exercise had the most dazzling outcomes out of all four. Some people did not understand fully the instructions and could not complete all steps. Some could not understand the relation between the exercises. Some participants felt the most excited about the irrelevant connections exercise, whereas others reported feeling themselves totally stupid while doing it.

Those who were able to complete the idea transformation exercise did improve the idea’s relevance and feasibility, although it normally came at the price of originality.

One of the positive outcomes of the ideas elaboration exercises was the fact that after completing them, most of the participants observed themselves being more focused, coming up with more concrete and elaborated ideas, and feeling more constructive and positive. Unfortunately, at the same time, they found it more difficult to create ideas in the second round. It seemed that instead of facilitating the creative process, my exercise made it more confusing and complicated.

**The Fifth Encounter: Creative Ritual Exercises**

This last exercise was about creating personal meaning assigned to the creative process, which is supposed to facilitate entering the state of the creative trance. I also wanted to integrate my discoveries related to the process of the brain entrainment.

The suspending judgment part consisted of two steps. First, each participant was supposed to create one’s own ritual that would help this person to enter into a creative state. The ritual was followed by an exercise that I adapted from Reumont (2006). I called it *Brain Breathing*. The idea was to induce a trance state through visualizing breathing through the brain. A person first needed to visualize how the brain expands
with inhaling, as if the air enters through the brain, and shrinks with exhaling. Then the breathing had to get modified, by interchanging the dominance of the right and the left hemispheres: first, when inhaling, the right hemisphere had to expand, and the left – to shrink, and then – the other way around. Finally a person following the exercise had to visualize the connections between the neurons and the judgments thoughts, when appearing, would get suspended in the air. By expanding the visualization of neuronal connections outside of the limits of the brain, a person would open up the personal conscious mind to the totality of the global field, and the judgment thoughts would get naturally integrated (accepted) into the process of this interaction. Figure 9 gives a visual representation of the exercise sequence, and in the Appendices E and F you will find a detailed description of the exercise.
Figure 9. *Brain Breathing* Exercise

This exercise trial had the most interesting results out of all four. It seemed that all participants could find a real deep connection to the personal meaning of their creative process through designing their rituals. Rituals of course vary. Three out of four participants included into their procedure listening to a piece of music that had a special meaning for each person. Some rituals involved ensuring privacy and environment
without disturbances and interruptions. Some started with organizing the personal working space. Some people used some techniques that helped them to concentrate, like finger labyrinths or sudoku. One participant organized a personal tea ceremony.

Here are, for example, the descriptions of two rituals people came up with:

*I organized my desk and my working space. Then I opened a window to let fresh air in, and prepared myself a cup of tea with cinnamon. I chose music and drank the tea while being conscious of the tranquility and harmony around me.*

*First I put earplugs into my ears so nothing would distract me. Then I do a sudoku, of a medium level, so it wouldn’t take too long. Then I take two random words and create 5 different phrases with them to warm up. Finally I try to feel the energy in the center of my brain.*

All participants found a close relationship between the Brain Breathing exercise and mediation and felt that the former had the same benefits as the latter. Half of the group observed clear improvement in terms of suspending judgment in the second round of ideation, while the others reported that the exercise resulted in different quality of ideas and a more meaningful process. The most encouraging fact is that the whole group found that they created more original ideas after the suspending judgment exercise, and they also produced less workable and relevant ideas. I felt really excited while reading their observations.

**Farewell**

To conclude my journey with the pilot group, I asked the participants to share what they had learned during the five weeks. Here are some examples of their responses:

“I see that the idea of suspending judgment is placing the judgment at the back seat while we are driving, and let it sit at the co-pilot’s seat when it is capable of constructive interpretation.”
“I realized myself that judgment is not an opinion but just a feeling that I am free to accept or suspend.”

“I believe I have improved significantly in the battle with myself for suspending judgment. It just requires practice and environment, and you gave us both.”

“I became aware of how my mind functions, how I can calm down the inner feeling of urgency to create ideas. It drove me to the conclusion that searching for ideas to resolve a challenge should be enjoyable.”

So, although not all of my exercises worked out as I had planned, they did seem to help with suspending judgment. And the next thing I should focus on is reflecting why improvement in suspending judgment does not necessarily lead to higher quantity of ideas and to more original ideas.

To conclude, I want to quote one more feedback from one of the participants:

“I think we should thank you for teaching us so many valuable things. Thank you very much!”
Section Five: Key Learnings
A Journey, not a Destination

My approach to this project was first and foremost toward the process of exploration. I did hope to obtain some tangible results, such as developing my own techniques of facilitating CPS process using more holistic approaches. But overall, I wanted to get deeper comprehension of the nature of the phenomenon of suspended judgment. I have been obsessed with this topic for two years, always considering it a cornerstone of my further professional development. Once a friend of mine advised me to write a book on the topic. I have been considering this idea for a while. I even contemplated it as one of the options for my Master’s project. One thing I had clear: mastering the suspension of judgment actually forms part of an integral process of personal development, and can’t be learnt in two hours of a CPS session. But while thinking about alternative topics to the project, I hoped that if I dove deep enough into the subject, somehow I would be able to figure out some tricks that would make me a marvelous facilitator who can do magic with human creativity.

When I began this journey, I opened a lot of doors. I entered some rooms and left them immediately. Others I explored more thoroughly. Some had new doors and passageways, leading to more intriguing labyrinths. I took a note of them. I have discovered even more doors that seemed probably worthwhile being open. Although I was pretty open in the beginning in respect to what may come of it, now I have realized more than ever, that I have yet to begin. I can’t even say that this search indicated to me the next direction and narrowed down my path. Surely I have a problem with converging, but at the moment, I have a feeling that I have just got a glimpse of possible pathways I
could take, each of them promising some unexpected adventure. Of course I have learned a lot during these months and these learnings will shape my further journey. But the main thing I have learned, once again, is that there are no shortcuts on this path. We can’t trick nature and grow in one day something that needs years to gestate. Well, maybe we can, but it will be just a trick with false results. One can’t master the art of suspending judgment in one day, as one can’t learn in two months to be a great facilitator, nor to manage the creative trance of others. Each process requires its own time, and if I don’t accept it, all that I will find will be frustration and disappointment.

While working on this project I worked in different directions. I explored literature. I tried to understand the nature of suspended judgment using various contemplative techniques. I observed my own thinking while using CPS for my own challenges. I collaborated with other people trying to develop my own, more holistic approach to CPS. I involved a pilot group to try the exercises I designed to facilitate suspending judgment. The discoveries I made on the way vary by its nature and its significance. But they all weave into the same web. So here I won’t be presenting my learnings grouped by parts of the project they are related to, but I have clustered them based on their meaning.

**Essence vs. Form: In Search of an Illusion?**

I have been interested in the nature of the creative trance in art for a long time. I was fascinated by this state when you feel dissolved in the creative process, and no matter what it is you are doing, it evolves on its own, without requiring any logical thinking, or decision making from your side. Everything seems right in this flow. It just happens. In art, it seems like a manifestation of a divine nature that makes you feel bigger than you
are. Once I summarized my reflections on the nature of this process in an essay titled *In a search of a somersault, or some reflections about form and content* (Mishina, 2007). The idea is that behind all things that evolve in this material world there is energy that is the basis of life. This energy is the *essence* of everything, and the material world is just the realm of manifestations of this essence in different forms. The thing is, we are not able to perceive this essence directly. The essence can only be revealed through a form. When an artist enters into this flow state of creative process, this is when the direct contact of an artist with the essence occurs, which consequently gets manifested in a form of a piece of art. In this way, art means giving form to the essence.

Several years ago, I learned about a methodology developed in the 70s in Stanford as a part of the Stargate program (Puthoff, 1996). The methodology is called *remote viewing*, and nowadays it is open to the public. There are training and workshops one could sign up to learn it, and the International Remote Viewing Association organizes each year a worldwide conference, at which recognized specialists in the field discuss their current issues (http://www.irva.org/). The principle of this technique is based on the premise that the origin of everything that ever happened, is happening and will happen in the material world, is coded in a certain global information matrix. Following a vigorous and strictly guided protocol, a remote-viewer can gain a direct access to this matrix in order to obtain information related to whatever topic the remote viewing session is cued to. My goal here is not to discuss the scientific validity on this methodology or the theory behind it. The thing is, I see it is directly related to the subject of suspending judgment. I have tried to learn the remote viewing technique, without much success so far. My experience says that to be able to do it one needs to have a very advanced meditative
level. What do I mean by that? I imagine that what happens to me while I am trying remote viewing is very similar to what the participants of my CPS sessions feel in respect to suspending judgment. A remote viewer is supposed to allow oneself to be just a channel to be able to simply register whatever inputs he or she perceives. Our mind is not used to working this way. It is constantly evaluating and interpreting the information it receives. Phrasing it in another way, it is constantly judging. So, remote viewing is a perfect example of a pure state of suspended judgment, as well as meditation. Meditation teaches us the capability to withdraw oneself from one’s own cognitive process and to observe it impartially without any judgment. Connecting it to the CPS process, it was logical to imagine that this is exactly the skill we need for ideation, to be able to open ourselves to the free flow of ideas and to perceive them without any judgment.

So, when I started working on this project I said to myself that this is exactly what I wanted to learn. I said to myself that I would use all techniques I can lay my hands on and that would allow me to practice this skill of letting myself follow the flow and open myself to any input I would perceive, trying to suspend totally the process of reasoning. On a daily basis I meditated, I scribed pages of automatic writing, and I kept a voice recorder beside my bed to exercise Image Streaming in the mornings. And here I encountered my first problem, or perhaps I should call it a doubt. From the very beginning of my work it started undermining the very base of my whole conception of the process of suspending judgment. Here I was, trying to keep up automatic writing, constantly dazzled by the question how I was supposed to form those sub-conscious inputs into words without applying any judgment? Judgment is simply a cognitive process of interpretation of non-cognitive inputs. The thoughts in its original form do not
come in words, they come in feelings, sensations, forms, images, and it is our mind that gives to all this essence the form of words, using conscious (well, maybe sometimes not that conscious) cognitive process of evaluation and interpretation. If we suspend this process the non-cognitive material will stay in its non-cognitive state. When I am trying to describe a mental image during an Image Streaming exercise, how can I totally suspend the process of interpretation? I won’t be able to describe the image, because any word I could ascribe to it would mean interpreting what I see. This is probably why in remote viewing they use drawing, as it allows you to doodle without thinking and without having to interpret the input. And this is also probably why my doodling exercise had that liberating effect on the participants of my pilot group but didn’t have that much influence on the quality of consequent ideation: it allowed them to connect to the state of openness that didn’t require any judgment, but when they had to go back to thinking process they couldn’t transpose this state to ideation, because it is not possible.

So, overwhelmed by all those questions, my work on the project started with the big doubt: Is it really possible to suspend judgment at all? Am I looking for an illusion? I don’t have an answer to this question, but I understood why the majority of creativity professionals I had talked to about the topic tended to look at the subject from the perspective of deferring judgment rather than suspending it. Probably it makes more sense because it is more feasible, and fits better into the thinking process. After all, when I was talking about giving form to the essence in art, what I had in mind mostly was abstract art. And it has the freedom to take whatever form that comes. Here an artist may allow oneself to suspend all judgment totally. But when we create ideas, those ideas should come in a certain form. So we still need our judgment, even if just a little bit. And
while I am writing these lines, I realize that most probably it is about finding a fine balance between both processes, exactly like Parnes et al. (1977) described it. It is like walking on the edge, joggling with judgment and non-judgment states.

**The Art of Facilitation**

**Master Yourself Before Mastering Others**

One of the main approaches I was going to practice in my initial conception of the project was exercising being in a generative state while working on my own or with others. It is the method I had learnt from Robert Dilts and Stephen Gilligan shortly before my work on this project began, and it was perfect for my project as it leads exactly towards the outcome I was looking for - creative trance. When a person is in a generative state, one becomes not only aware of one’s own center, but also is open and connected to everything in one’s environment, and those inputs are perceived not by the cognitive mind, but through one’s whole being. When in a group, people in a generative state create a common generative field that transforms collaboration into a symbiosis when the sum of individual inputs gives birth to a totally new whole. As you can see, the concept of generative field was very similar to my conception of the state of suspended judgment.

Luckily practicing generative state doesn’t require any special conditions. One just needs to be present, centered and direct one’s attention inwards and outwards at the same time. At the time of communicating with others one should focus one’s attention not on intellectual information provided by the cognitive mind but on the resonances in the body, allowing letting the inputs of the somatic self in. My premise was that if I practiced a generative state long enough, I would create a generative field sufficiently strong to involve other people I am interacting with into it.
Curiously enough, together with the work on my Master’s project, I initiated a therapeutic process related to my own personal development. While I was searching in the labyrinth of creative thinking, I was also rummaging in the darkest places of my soul trying to fit together some lost pieces of the puzzle of my life. It turned out it was rather difficult to maintain myself in the center, if not to say impossible, not to mention being in a generative state, whether alone or with the others. This part of my project didn’t work out at all, and it made me realize that if I want to be a facilitator of a holistic creative process I can’t take my own process of personal development out of the equation. And this process doesn’t take two months. It’s a life long path. Once again, there is no use in looking for shortcuts. I will be growing as a facilitator together with my personal growth.

**Suspending Judgment vs. Deferring Judgment**

Understanding the difference between suspending judgment and deferring judgment, as I explained it in the beginning of the section dedicated to literature review, was one of my first discoveries of this project. Not only did I realize that I actually had in mind a concept totally different from the one that the original process conceived, but, while I was pursuing my search, at one point it became clear to me that the state of openness and acceptance that I called the state of suspended judgment is indeed very important, but we need it only at certain moments of the process, primarily in ideation. For the rest of the CPS stages the deferring judgment principle works just perfectly. So many times I helped my clients to organize their thoughts using this principle. It is what makes CPS so brilliant – the fact that it is not only the process that helps us to think more creatively, but it also helps us to think more efficiently and productively.
Holistic is Coming from Whole

For the period of the last two years I have been shifting between cognitive and non-cognitive in the world of creativity facilitation. From the very beginning of my studies, I had it clear that my long-term interest in the field is related to consciousness development and personal growth. However in search of ways to enter the professional market, unexpectedly for myself, I have immersed myself into the world of organizational creativity. From the paradigm of personal development I switched to exploring deeper all types of thinking and problem solving techniques and methodologies, like TRIZ, Systems Thinking, strategic thinking, and all other types of thinking. When it became apparent that those methodologies still were not rendering results I was looking for, I decided it was time to go back to a more holistic approach, without fear of bringing it into the corporate world where it might seem inappropriate. After all, aren't our times all about unconventional solutions? This is how I came to the idea of this project. However immediately after I started working on it, my search brought me back to cognitive tools. Despite my project advisor assurance that it was ok to change my mind and let the project evolve as it required, I had my doubts. I was concerned about this constant going back and forward and switching between topics of interests. Why can't I focus on just one area? Surely I would learn more and much faster.

Now, after I have analyzed the feedback from the participants of my pilot group, it became clear to me that I can't actually focus on just one area if I am interested in real holistic approach. Suspending judgment may be an important element of the process of
creative problem solving, but it is not the only one. No matter what extent you are able to suspend your judgment and enter the state of the creative trance, if you don't organize your thinking process appropriately, you won't get all benefits out of it. My trials weren't organized to take care of all steps of CPS process. My main focus was on how I can influence people's ability to suspend judgment. My participants were left without guidance at the moment of formulating a challenge, or at the moment of using ideation techniques. Looking at their responses I can see the difficulties some of them were having in this respect. And I think this discrepancy in the emphasis of the process was the reason why, despite their observations of improvement in the ability to suspend judgment, it didn't have much effect on the quality of ideas. Many of them realized, throughout the process of our collaboration on the project, the great difference the appropriate formulation of the challenge can make to the possibility to encounter a great creative solution. Their feedback also indicates that they needed more thorough guidance in the ideation process. I also have learnt about the importance of the way of giving instructions. When you work with people at a distance it is still very important to make them feel accompanied. Visuals, video and audio instructions may make a great difference in this respect.

So, my main conclusion is, I think my constant shifting between the approaches makes perfect sense. I can't focus on just either cognitive or non-cognitive. Holistic approach requires the same fine balancing between the two, as suspending judgment - between judgment and non-judgment.
Trance and Personal Meaning

We have always been taught the importance of creating an energetic, good-humored environment at a session so people could feel relaxed and playful. The principle of deferring judgment is supposed to create a safe psychological environment. Apparently it is not so much about feeling safe as it is about feeling motivated to be creative, although motivation is definitely related to safety. The topic of intrinsic motivation has been widely related to the matter of creativity in literature (Hennessey, 2010), but we rarely make explicit emphasis on connecting our participants to their intrinsic motivation to be creative and to look for a creative solution to the challenge at a CPS session. I have learned the importance to pay more attention to this aspect of the process.

Intrinsic motivation is what gives meaning to the process, and when we consider what we do meaningful, we are more likely to be able to deal and accept the difficulties like judgment, insecurity, uncertainty, and ambiguity. I find it curious and intriguing that it was the ritual exercise, the one that was about assigning a personal meaning to the creative process, that had the most significant results. Not the one that bridged ideation to the unconscious. And not the one that guided the participants through the process of self-acceptance. The ritual. The meaning created by a person for the person. Starting from here, it would be interesting to explore how I can guide a group to create a common ritual that would be meaningful to all individual participants.

It seems that personal meaning is also an important attribute of a trance state, or of the process that leads to trance. It is also something important to take into account, as,
if this is true, then any elements of trance rituals borrowed from cultures distinct from the one of the group won’t render the results we may expect, if we don’t help people to attribute a personal significance to that rituals and establish emotional connection to it.

My personal experience seems to confirm it. While working on this project I have tried out on myself all sorts of brain entrainment, therapeutic and trance inducing techniques. And I can’t say that I achieved great results in the matter. During one week each morning I deliberately dedicated half an hour to dancing, using various types of music trying to enter a trance state in vane. But one night I was listening to the music that had a strong emotional significance for me at that particular moment, and I don’t know how several minutes later I found myself dancing, without any judgment, without being conscious of what I was doing and why, without being able to stop. I was in trance. And I must confess, I have been dancing ever since, every time I hear that music.

If I had to summarize the most important learnings I have described above, I think I would present them in the following order:

- Don’t look for shortcuts. Some processes take time, so be patient and just walk the path.
- Pay attention to all components of the process. Cognitive and non-cognitive have equal importance.
- Intrinsic motivation and personal meaning are the keys to success of a creative endeavor.
Section Six: Conclusion

Long Way to Go

I have initiated this journey being fully aware that this Master’s project would be just the beginning. Now this fact is even more clear. And I will definitely continue walking on this road. I will be patient, working thoroughly, without expecting miraculous results in short times. I will continue searching for ways to help people to immerse deeper into their creative potential, going beyond the creative thinking. Nevertheless I will pay more balanced attention to both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of creative process and development of creative potential.

Developing My Own Approach to CPS Facilitation

I think the exercises I designed rendered interesting results in the trials with the pilot group. I will look for possible ways to integrate them in my group sessions. I think they require more field-testing, so I could fine tune them better and observe their effects under different conditions.

I am not sure about the future of the Creative Ecosystem proposal. The collaboration with my art-therapist partner has been intensive and very interesting, and I strongly believe in the potential of adding an art-therapeutic approach to CPS methodology. However, based on feedback I received from some professionals and potential clients, it looks like the extension of the program we are offering might pose a problem. I have an impression I am not the only one who is looking for fast solutions, it is a general disease of our times. It very often represents an issue for organizations to let
its employees spend too many hours away from their direct duties, even though it might bring solid benefits in the long run. Companies frequently tend to search for quick fixes instead of investing time and efforts in long-term constructive solutions. And if it seems that art-therapy can only render real positive effects through a lengthy and thorough process, probably the program will have to be adapted to be able to respond better to the demands of the market. I will still be looking for possibilities to collaborate with other specialists from various therapeutic areas in order to bring deeper personal development aspect into corporate innovation processes. I believe it is an important element of the emerging creative economy (Mishina, 2011b).

While I was trying out my exercises on myself before sending them to my pilot group, I was working on a challenge of defining a new creative strategy for my business that would allow me to find a distinguished positioning on the market of creative services. One of the directions I want to pursue is exploring possibilities of on-line facilitation and training. Taking into account all my work with the pilot group was done on distance, this project has been a great learning experience and a good starting point for me to start building my on-line methodology on it.

**To Trance or not to Trance**

Although I admitted that my search for ways to facilitate a creative trance was an attempt to find a short-cut to a process that usually takes a long time to evolve, I am still interested in the topic of trance facilitation and I believe it could be an interesting add-on to my skills set. I am planning to seriously pursue this direction. I am going to continue my training in NLP as this is exactly the area that I think will be the most beneficial for me in this respect. I have already employed NLP techniques in my CPS sessions with
groups as well as in one-on-one sessions, and I believe they aid to create an appropriate atmosphere beneficial for creative thinking. I know NLP is not exactly a methodology that has been accepted by the scientific community (Witkowski, 2010), but my own experience of using its approaches in my personal and professional practice as creativity facilitator and coach tells me that NLP techniques could be a very beneficial incorporation into the CPS process. There are evidences that suggest that there could be certain impartiality in the academic research dedicated to NLP (Einspruch and Forman, 1985). Besides, we should be open to the possibility that the academic world doesn’t know everything. After all, even its greatest minds express the concern that not everything is so great in contemporary science (Bohm, and Peat, 2010).

**Journey Begins**

To sum it up, it has been an interesting journey, and I don't want to get off the train. The real work has just begun. I am going to enjoy the ride.
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Appendix A.

Exploring the Challenge Results: Ladder of Abstraction
Appendix A. Exploring the Challenge Results: Ladder of Abstraction

- How to teach people to accept crazy ideas?
- How to stimulate people's innate motivation to be creative?
- What are all the ways in which one may release one's creative potential?
- How to help people release their inner birds in a session?
- How to help people feel psychologically safe at my session?
- How to one can learn to trust the flow?
- What are all the ways one can feel safe psychologically?
- How can we turn our fears into creative assets?
- How to overcome the fear of unconscious?
- How to become conscious of one's fears?
- How to become more creative results at my sessions?
- How to master working with generative state?
- How to improve my own ability to connect to generative state?
- What are all the ways one can learn to become conscious of one's own judgment?
- What are all the ways one can get into a CPS session?
- How to fit somatic experience into a CPS session?
- How to organize sessions in such a way that we would time to work with somatic intelligence and unconscious?
- What are all the ways we could stimulate activation of certain brain waves?
- What are all techniques one may use to train oneself to suspend judgment?
- How to trick our neurology to overcome automatic paths in 3 hours?

It would be great to be able to help people to use their creative potential at max at a CPS session.
Appendix B.

Exercise *Accepting Your Inner Critic*
Appendix B. Exercise Accepting Your Inner Critic

To complete the exercise you need to observe what judgments come to your mind when you are ideating. Note these judgmental thoughts down.

Step 1. Review the list of the judgments you noted down and imagine as of it was another person saying these things to you. How do you imagine this person? What would be your relationship with this person? Take a blank sheet of paper and color pencils or markers, or any other drawing material and draw that critical person you have just imagined. This is a visualization of your Inner Critic.

Step 2. Reflect on why is it important for you to solve your challenge? Have you tried to solve it before? Can you resolve it using your normal patterns of thinking and behavior? What is the importance of finding a creative solution to this challenge?

Now reflect on the importance of suspending judgment while you are looking for creative solutions to your challenge. What will happen if you evaluate ideas at the same time as searching for them?

Close your eyes and visualize what the final result may be if you implement a creative solution to your challenge. Try to imagine it with maximum details. Take a blank sheet of paper and draw what you have imagined. Use color if possible.

Step 3. Look at the drawings you have just made. One represents you Inner Critic, and the other one – your Creative Self:
Place the two drawings on the floor in front of you, at equal distance from yourself. Direct your awareness to the conflict these two parts of you cause in your interior. Once again, imagine these two parts of yourself as if they were two different persons.

Now step into the position of your Inner Critic (the place marked by your drawing on the floor). Look at your Creative Self from the position of the Inner Critic. How does the Critic see the Creative Self? What does he/she think of the other part? What is the Inner Critic’s positive function in this situation? Why and what for does he/she does what he/she does?

Now leave the place of the Inner Critic and go back to the position of the Observer. From there step into the position of your Creative Self. Look at your Inner Critic from this position. How does your Creative Self see the situation what does he/she think of the Critic? What is your Creative Self’s positive function in this situation? Why and what for does she/he does what she/he does?
Go back to the Observer’s position. Look at the situation again, taking into account the information you obtained from both perceptive positions. How does it change your perception of the conflict between the two parts of yourself? What do both parts should take into account to modify their behavior so there would be no conflict?

Go back to the position of the Inner Critic, at the same time integrating the perceptions of all the positions: Inner Critic, Creative Self and the Observer. How does change the Inner Critic’s perception now? How does he/she see the Creative Self now? What is the Inner Critic ready to commit to let the Creative Self fulfill his/her positive function too?
Leave the place of Inner Critic and return to the position of the Observer. Step into the position of the Creative Self again, at the same time integrating the perceptions of all the positions: Inner Critic, Creative Self and the Observer. How does change the Creative Self’s perception now? How does he/she see the Inner Critic now? What is the Creative Self ready to commit to let the Inner Critic fulfill his/her positive function too?

Return to the Observer’s position. Close your eyes and open up your arms. Imagine placing each of the two parts, the Inner Critic and the Creative Self, on each hand.

Step by step move into the center in between two perceptive positions, bringing your hands towards your heart. Let both points of view integrate within yourself.
Appendix C.

Exercise Connect Unrelated Concepts
Appendix C. Exercise: Connect Unrelated Concepts

Practice your creative skills:

**CONNECT UNRELATED CONCEPTS**

- Quasar - super brilliant start, flash, explosion
- Paris Hilton
- Shift in star's orbit
- Lexus

- Quasar - star, fame; dislexy - errors in writing, orthography
- Quasar - dislexy - change the order
- Quasar - car, dislexy

- Quasar - dislexy
- Quasar - light, to see; Dislexy - confuse, to see in the wrong order, to see discontinuously
- Quasar - star, light, blinking, brain entrainment

- Dislexy - confusion of perception, different perception, different result, differentiation
- Quasar - star, flash, blinking, eyes; dislexy - writing

- Game: writing with one eye closed

- New lumunic method of curing dislexy

- A supernova explosion has caused dislexy attacks in half of the world population
- Quo Vadis?
- The spy's dislexy was the reason why he messed up morse code in his message
- If you want to be a star, you have to be different and break the rules
Appendix D.

Exercise Ideas Elaboration
Appendix D. Exercise Ideas Elaboration

**Challenge:** How to achieve immediate practical results with short creativity sessions?

**Idea:** Creativity is like instant beverage.

**Idea evaluation:**
- Originality: 10
- Relevance: 5

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**What do I like in this idea?**

**What is the essence of this idea?**

**How can I connect this essence to my challenge?**

**What concerns do I have about this idea?**

**What does make it less feasible?**

**How to combine the essence of the idea with the ideas that overcome your concerns?**

**Modified Idea:**
- Originality: 7
- Relevance: 10

---

**Ideas to overcome concerns:** Can you adapt some other more feasible ideas?

**Idea:** Offer sessions for free and let the client pay later based on their evaluation of the session's value.

**Idea evaluation:**
- Originality: 3
- Feasibility: 3

---

**Taking into account that still few people in Spain are aware of the value of creative thinking, and the current economic situation in the country, this option may make it easier for clients to make a decision to try my services. Also it demonstrates that I am confident that they will like my services.**

---

**To reduce financial risk for a client related to buying services they are not familiar with.**

**I could offer a possibility to recover the price paid for a session if the client didn’t find a value in it, but without making it too easy for a client.**

**I could offer some incentives to the clients to work hard on implementing creative solutions we would elaborate.**

---

**1) Offer money back guarantee if in 3 months after the session the client thinks that it was not worth it (even I probably could offer to return more than they paid).**

**2) When the client implements the creative solutions elaborated at CPS sessions with me, they can get back half of the price they paid. (In this way they will have more incentives to work on creative resolution of the challenge and I will be able to use their success for my promotion.)**

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**1) Originality: 8 (at least on this market no one does it, for what I know)**

**Feasibility: 10**

**2) Originality: 10**

**Feasibility: 7**
Appendix E.

Exercise Creative Ritual
Appendix E. Exercise *Creative Ritual*

I invite you to think about ideation process as a ritual. The goal of a ritual is to create certain conditions that facilitate for our neurology entering a certain state that our self has associated to these conditions.

A ritual has effect only when it makes sense for those who participate in it. So I invite you to invent your own creative ritual. Think about all those elements that may help you to enter that state of mental flow, play and openness. What do you need to feel good about yourself, so you could open the door to new ideas?

A ritual may have various components:

- Sound (music or not);
- Movement (a dance, or a walk, or any other action involving your body);
- Visualization;
- Affirmations (prayer, mantra, self-affirmations);
- Symbolic objects and environment.
Here are some examples of what your ritual may contain:

- Listen to your favorite music;
- Lock yourself up in your room and dance to your favorite music;
- Search some inspiring quotes;
- Visualize a possible final result of your creative process;
- Walk through a finger labyrinth;
- Create nice environment in the place where you are;
- Make yourself comfortable on a sofa with a glass of wine.

No matter what you do, what matters is your awareness of all your actions, and performing all steps with all your consciousness and with intention to enter the creative state.

Conclude your ritual with the Brain Breathing exercise.
Appendix F.

Exercise Brain Breathing
Appendix F. Exercise *Brain Breathing*

Sit comfortably, keeping your back straight and your feet on the floor. Uncross your arms and legs. Relax the muscles (keeping the spine straight). Close your eyes and start deep breathing. Breathe deeply for several seconds.

Now try to visualize the air entering and going out of your nostrils. Within one respiration cycle (inhale-exhale), direct your awareness to one nostril (imagine that all air you inhale enters only this nostril, and when you exhale – it leaves through this nostril too), and within the next cycle – to the other nostril. Keep re-directing your attention in this way for approximately one minute:

Now visualize your brain. Imagine that you breathe through the brain. When you inhale, the brain expands, when exhale, – it shrinks:
Visualize breathing through the brain for approximately one minute. Then imagine that when you inhale, only the right hemisphere expands, and the left one on the contrary shrinks. When you exhale, both hemispheres go back to their normal state. With the next breathing cycle it happens the other way around: now the left hemisphere expands when you inhale, and the right one shrinks:

Keep this visualization for approximately a minute.

Now visualize millions of neuronal connections in your brain:
Some of these connections represent judgmental thoughts. So, every time when you become aware of a judgment, of any evaluation thought, visualize it suspending in the air. You can imagine it as a bubble, for example, or in any other form that makes it easier for you to visualize this suspension:

Now imagine neuronal connections expanding outside of the brain boundaries towards the exterior world. The judgments suspended in the air get integrated into this network, and become origins of new ideas:
Appendix G.

Concept Paper
Appendix G. Concept Paper

In search of suspended judgment

Name: Irina Mishina    Date Submitted: 29/01/2012

Project Type (Develop a Skill/Talent or Use a Skill/Talent to Improve the Quality of Life for Others or Meet a Product Need or Vision): Develop a Skill and Meet a Product Need or Vision

Section One: Purpose and Description of Project

Creative Problem Solving (CPS) methodology is based, in my opinion, on two main principles: affirmative thinking and suspending judgment. According to my experience, many people conceive the latter as a pure formal rule of division between divergent and convergent thinking and the prohibition to express any evaluation during group ideation. Although this rule is indeed important for the success of a CPS endeavor, I believe the true nature of the concept of suspended judgment is much deeper. It is not so much about avoiding expressing our opinion about others’ ideas but it is the ability to remove, although only temporarily, the filters of one’s perception and to open one’s whole being, farther beyond the cognitive level, to new inputs, whether external or internal, without subjecting those to automatic cognitive reactions, such as interpretation, evaluation and categorization. Suspending judgment allows us to prevent our prior knowledge from inhibiting our ability to explore alternatives. The state of suspended judgment is similar to the state of creative trance in artistic expression, when the creator serves more as a channel of unconscious processes rather than acts in a rational manner.
In my previous work (Mishina, 2011), I exposed my consciousness view on creativity, according to which I conceive creativity principally as the attitude of consciousness, “doing whatever you do as if for the first time” (p. 5) as opposed to automatic behavior based on established patterns of perception, behavior and thinking. If I need to define the link between this point of view and the most generally accepted definition of creativity as producing something novel and useful, I would sustain that Creative Problem Solving as a methodology provides a framework that allows to apply creative attitude to creation of solutions/products that are novel and useful. The concept of suspending judgment as one of the primordial principles of CPS introduces the attitude of consciousness to the process. In order to be able to suspend one’s judgment one, first of all, should be aware of this judgment, hence the state of suspended judgment is closely related to the state of complete self-awareness, mindfulness.

In his work Jung often considered creative process and creative energy of the psyche as a result of the interaction between the conscious and unconscious parts of the self (Jung, 1917/1928, 1921, 1933). When we suspend judgment we deliberately invite our unconscious to reveal itself. Our conscious mind gives a form to this unconscious content, but suspending judgment allows us to be aware that this form is only an interpretation based on our previous experience and established patterns, and not the ultimate reality. This awareness opens a possibility for multiple forms being created based on the same content of the unconscious.

There are many theories that consider the nature of the creative trance. The theories of Jung (1998a, 1998b), Kandinsky (1999) and Paz (1956) saw the process of artistic creation as a mystic act of abysmal connection to the collective unconscious.
Gilligan (2008), on the other hand, described the interaction between cognitive and somatic selves as *relational self*, the wholeness of one’s being that allows being connected to oneself and at the same time to something bigger than one. When a person opens up to the flow of life that passes through oneself, this connection permits the emergence of something new, that didn’t exist before. Gilligan and Dilts (2011) call this *generative state* and consider it as a prerequisite for any creative process. Many esoteric traditions suggest the existence of a global information field that is the source of everything that is unfolding at the material level. Quantum physicist David Bohm even developed a mathematical model that describes the relationship between this field (*implicate order*) and the material reality (*explicate order*) (as cited by Wilson, 1990). The technique of *Remote Viewing* (Lee, 2008; Puthoff, 1996) is based on the premise that we can access the data from this field if we succeed to remove the filters of our cognitive perception. If we could prove the existence of such a field, my hypothesis would be that during CPS process, with the playful attitude and the intention to suspend judgment, at certain moments we achieve to remove temporarily these filters and get the direct access to that global information field. And bingo, we have an idea! However it is not my purpose here to prove this hypothesis right or wrong. It doesn’t actually matter whether the source of our ideas is external or internal. What is undeniable is that coming up with a creative idea indeed requires “removing the filters” of our standard perception, questioning assumptions, in order to overcome self-imposed barriers, internal blocks, and constraints of a problem space.

Many neuroscientific studies, as cited, for example, in Horan (2009), and Singer (2009) demonstrated that creation of new neuronal connections require prior access to the
states of the brain that are different from the one associated with rational cognitive activities. I sustain that suspending judgment facilitates access to these states. The state of suspended judgment is a state of creative trance. We shouldn’t necessarily imagine now a case of an ecstatic artist with crazy eyes, not aware of oneself while creating a masterpiece. From the point of consciousness view on creativity, and especially in the context of Creative Problem Solving, creative trance is a generative state in which a person is conscious of oneself as an integral part of the greater whole and is able to use this connection to create new forms, ideas, products, solutions.

My project is about exploring the nature of suspended judgment. My purpose is twofold:

1. Developing an integral methodology, for my own professional use, that would combine CPS with other, more holistic approaches, that would allow us to tap into our creative potential at a deeper than just cognitive level and would provide higher creative quality to the work with ideas and solutions.

2. Developing my own skills as a facilitator of creative trance.

**Rationale for Selection**

I have been involved in some kind of creative activities for my whole life. I dreamt of being a dancer. I studied music and fine arts. I was writing poems and novels, inventing games. When I was 11, I decided to become an actress, and since then for more than a decade theatre became one of my main passions. The brightest memory of this endeavor is one of the interpretation workshops that I attended in my twenties, preparing myself for interpretation schools auditions. Practically the only thing we were doing during 4 months of that workshop was dancing. We were trying to feel the music,
become the music. Despite my original surprise and resistance (the experience I was offered didn’t really correspond to my concept of dramatic interpretation), slowly I was becoming aware of the creative freedom inside me that I hadn’t felt to such an extent, neither before nor after. Now I realize that those were the moments of truly suspended judgment.

About 8 years ago I decided to make a radical change in my professional life. I switched from finance to photography and video but deep inside I was always imagining myself exploring further the ways of connecting to that state of a total creative freedom that allows you to transcend the limitations of one’s own perception of the reality and of the self into the field of the real creation. Along the way I started wondering about the nature of the creative process. I was looking at it from an artistic point of view, but I was also curious about how in general ideas come to our mind. What makes a certain idea get born in a mind of a certain person? This wondering has brought me in the end to the International Center for Studies in Creativity.

My first encounter with CPS process was an exciting discovery. I had long believed that creativity was not only about arts, despite all my own artistic activities, and CPS provided a wonderful framework for applying creative attitude to real life situations and developing original solutions. The whole methodology seemed to do magic, while guiding you though different steps of a problem solving process, interchanging divergent and convergent thinking, constantly focusing your mind on opportunities instead of barriers. Situations that didn’t have a possible solution didn’t exist anymore. You just needed to have enough patience to follow through the process and be brave to suspend your judgment long enough. The concept of suspending judgment brought a huge relief
of the pressure of having to deliver something solid and extraordinary at the same time, while working on a solution of a certain problem. Although I had been exploring the nature of creative trance in art for quite a long time already, combining my own process of creation with meditation, and diving into numerous esoteric traditions, the area of problem solving seemed to be different. There was always a weight that in the end you had to deliver something that would respond to certain criteria. The principle of suspended judgment took this burden off my shoulders. I had a permission to have stupid ideas, nonsense ideas, unrealistic ideas, ideas that would never work, basically because I would never know that they are such. Suspending judgment was adding the component of creative trance to problem solving, bringing it closer to artistic creation process.

The discovery of Creative Problem Solving was so exciting that I began teaching it to others even before I started my Master’s program studies at ICSC. Although sometimes the reaction of those with whom I was sharing CPS principles was positive, the main feedback often was that many people found it very difficult to actually suspend judgment. These were my own observations too. Very often after a session I had a feeling of disappointment. Although I was able to guide my clients through the process, there seemed to be little creativity in what we were doing. The majority of the participants of my sessions struggled with setting aside their habits of thinking and getting out of the comfort zone. Ideas rarely took an unexpected angle, and even when they did, people normally were finding it difficult to transform them into workable solutions, even using CPS tools. Creating connections between seemingly unrelated concepts felt out of the question. Warm up activities didn’t help too much. People could have fun and feeling quite at ease proposing out of the box ideas for a ridiculous challenge, but when the
process turned into the questions of real life, the participants found themselves more invested in the problem. The burden of the responsibility for the solution often made it impossible for them to let it go, to let their imagination loose, or to let the ideas simply appear in their mind. Even if they were not afraid of being judged by the others, their own internal evaluation was blocking their thinking. And it is not a surprise. Our inner critic is formed at the very early stages of our life together with our personality. Its only function is to protect us from being hurt, from pain and suffering, and it fulfills its function in the only way that this part of ourselves is familiar with. We have been living with our critic for our whole life and have been giving credit to its judgments without being aware of it. It is a strongly integrated habit of our neurology. So it seems rather naïve to expect that people will be able to suspend their judgment with a simple command.

I usually get very positive feedback from my clients. They often leave the sessions I facilitate excited and content, thanking me for helping them to discover new points of view or simply clarify their mind. However one of the persistent feelings I have after my session is that the group hadn’t really tapped into its real creative potential. Now, after two years of experience as creativity facilitator, I have it clear that CPS, with all my love for this methodology, doesn’t actually make anyone more creative. It offers a wonderful framework for applying one’s creativity potential to problem solving, but we need something else to help this potential to thrive. What I am looking for is to develop my own methodology that would integrate CPS with other, more holistic approaches that would allow me to take my professional work to the next, deeper level, in my aspiration
to help my clients to connect profoundly to their creative potential. I decided that my Master’s Project could be a perfect start on this journey of exploration.

Section Two: Pertinent Literature and Resources

I want to explore all type of literature, both academic and popular press, to form as thorough understanding as possible of all possible point of views on the nature of the process of suspending judgment and of the creative trance. My initial search will be focused on the academic databases the Butler Library of Buffalo State College gives me access to and on Google search engine. I will start my search with the key words “suspending judgment”, “deferring judgment”, “postponing judgment”, “resistance to premature closure”, “creative trance”, “altered state of consciousness”, “neuroscience and creativity”, “creative relaxation”, “creative blocks” and will adapt the list according to my findings.

For a while I have been exploring a possibility of using different NLP techniques in my CPS sessions exactly with the goal of facilitating suspending judgment. I will look further into this topic, especially focusing on the concept of generative state and generative collaboration as taught by Stephen Gilligan and Robert Dilts (Gilligan, 2008; Gilligan, Dilts, 2011).

One of the most important resources of my exploration will be collaboration with various professionals from the fields of art-therapy, music therapy and Gestalt therapy, and of course with my classmates.

I also want to explore the possibilities of meditation as the way of penetrating the true nature of the reality (Horan, 2009). It means that I will use my own meditation practice as a possible source of ideas on how to facilitate suspending judgment.
Preliminary Bibliography


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**Section Three: Plan to Achieve the Goals**

First of all, I would like to explore all pertinent literature to understand the theoretical background of the nature of suspending judgment from neurological, psychological, cognitive, somatic and experiential points of view. Then I plan to interview various professionals from the fields of music and art therapy, and will
collaborate with them searching for possible ways of integrating their approaches or using their experience in my CPS session. I will also discuss the topic with some of my classmates from the Supremes cohort, looking for their ideas about the ways of facilitating suspending judgment based on their own experience and their findings in the areas of their research and investigations.

Based on my findings from literature and discussions with others, I will diverge for ideas on how to facilitate suspending judgment during CPS sessions. I will test the best ideas at the sessions with individual and group clients, and with experimental groups arranged specifically for the purpose of the project.

Taking into account that one of my goals is to develop the skills of a facilitator of creative trance, I need to work on my own ability of creating my personal generative state and using it in my work with others. I will practice maintaining a generative state on a regular basis in my communication with other people, paying attention to the resonance with the fields of the others and observing how it affects the quality of my communication and interactions. I will keep a daily diary where I will note down those observations. I also want to adapt my daily meditation practice, not only as a means to develop my own mindfulness and the skill of self-observation, which in turn facilitates the ability to suspend judgment, but also as creative contemplation (Horan, 2009), providing the conditions for incubation and insight process. After each meditation session I will take notes of ideas that may come to my mind regarding the nature of the state of suspended judgment and the ways of facilitating it.
## Project Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>JANUARY</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Jan 29 | - Edit the draft of the Concept Paper  
- Submit the draft of the Concept Paper to Erik  
- Revise the Concept paper based on Erik’s feedback  
- Submit the Draft to Cyndi                                               | 14    |
|        | **FEBRUARY**                                                                                                                                |       |
| Feb 5  | - Finalize the Concept Paper based on Cyndi’s feedback  
- Submit the final version of the Concept Paper  
- Initial search for pertinent academic literature  
- Reading                                                                                      | 10    |
| Feb 12 | - Search for projects that might be interesting to me in Digital Commons  
- Choose a project for Adopt a Project review  
- Continued search for pertinent literature  
- Reading                                                                                     | 10    |
| Feb 19 | - Reading  
- Daily diary and personal practice                                                                                                           | 10    |
| Feb 26 | - Write Adopt a Project review  
- Comment on Adopt a Project reviews  
- Start working on the Draft of the sections 1-3  
- Reading  
- Daily diary and personal practice                                                                                                        | 20    |
|        | **MARCH**                                                                                                                                    |       |
| Mar 4  | - Finalize the Draft of the sections 1-3  
- Collaboration with a music therapist  
- Interviews with the classmates  
- Continued collaboration with an art therapist  
- Daily diary and personal practice                                                            | 20    |
| Mar 11 | - Interviews with the classmates  
- Elaborate the list of techniques for facilitating suspending judgment  
- Collaboration with a music therapist  
- Continued collaboration with an art therapist  
- Daily diary and personal practice                                                                 | 20    |
| Mar 18 | - Continued collaboration with an art therapist  
- Test ideas  
- Daily diary and personal practice                                                                                                       | 20    |
Section Four: What Will be the Tangible Product(s) or Outcomes?

The main outcome of this project will be the set of exercises and techniques of facilitating suspending judgment and creative trance that I will be able to use in my professional practice as creativity facilitator, consultant and coach. My goal is to develop a workshop dedicated to the art of suspending judgment. However the implementation of this workshop will be taken after the Master’s project has been completed. Also, I will have initial material to start writing a book about suspending judgment.
Some of the most important, although not so tangible, outcomes I expect to obtain from my project are an improvement in the quality of the results of my sessions, the rise of my self-confidence as a creativity professional and more satisfaction from my work.

**Section Five: Personal Learning Goals**

- Form a better understanding of the nature of suspending judgment
- Improve my skills as a creativity facilitator and coach
- Develop the ability to create a personal generative state
- Improve the quality of my interpersonal communications
- Understand the better ways of facilitating generative collaboration in groups
- Improve my meditation and self-observation skills
- Identify possible ways of integrating creative trance into CPS sessions

**Criteria of Evaluation**

The main factor that drives me in the development of this project is my own feeling of dissatisfaction with the results of the sessions I facilitate, the intuition that there should be another, more holistic way of facilitating creative problem solving. Therefore, how I will feel about my work will be my own criteria of evaluation of my results. It is totally subjective, but taking into account that this is not an academic research, that I am going to use the outcomes of the project primarily in my own work, I think I can afford to guide myself first of all by my inner feeling.

However, I will also use various forms of formal evaluations too. Suspending judgment is an internal process, and the person oneself is at the best position to estimate to what extent he/she was able to suspend judgment during the creative process. So, at the end of each session I will ask the participants to fill in a short questionnaire where I will
ask them to evaluate the effect that different activities had on them. I could also possibly use some form of quantitative evaluation, but its elaboration is out of the scope of this project.

References


