

# **Syllabus for Creative Problem Solving Tools and Process**

## **Education 370/570 – 1, 2 or 3 credits**

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This class is designed to allow people to learn about a deliberate Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process and the generating and focusing tools used while applying the CPS process. The CPS process is used widely throughout the world in business, industry, and non-profit and educational organizations. Organizations, groups and individuals who apply this CPS process also know that it is a process to manage change.

All participants of this course will gain knowledge of generating and focusing tools, which is part of the one credit portion of the course. Beyond one credit, students will gain the ability to apply a dynamic process to:

- Develop clarity to challenges, opportunities and issues;
- Find many new, varied and unusual ideas to solve a problem that you have already defined, to meet a challenge or overcome a concern;
- Translate interesting and promising ideas into useful, acceptable, and implementable actions.

Participants will also learn how to:

- Defer judgment while generating ideas and how to use affirmative judgment during focusing.
- Apply generating tools and focusing tools during the CPS process.
- Understand and appreciate their own and other's preference for problem solving.
- All participants are asked to take the VIEW assessment online. Each person who takes the VIEW assessment will receive feedback to understand his or her personal preference for creativity style and approach to change.

### **Brief Outline of the Course**

I. Introduction. This is an introduction to the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Framework system 6.1™ and the CPS tools for generating and focusing. This process is based on over four decades of theory, research and development of how people find unique and useful solutions to their personal issues, challenges and opportunities.

- A. Expectations and possibilities.
- B. Creativity and your personal creativity style.
- C. VIEW feedback – group and individual
  1. impact of style and CPS Framework
  2. impact of personal style on group work
- D. CPS Framework System overview
  1. Three components

2. Six stages
  3. Guidelines for generating and focusing: maintaining a dynamic balance.
  4. Generating tools
  5. Focusing tools
- II. Examining the three components in depth.
- A. Understanding the Challenge (UC)
    1. Benefits for individual and team problem solving efforts, and when to use the UC component.
    2. Constructing Opportunities Stage.
    3. Exploring Data Stage.
    4. Framing Problems Stage.
    5. Review of generating and focusing tools for the UC component
  - B. Generating Ideas (GI)
    1. Benefits for individual and team problem solving efforts, and when to use the GI component.
    2. Generating Ideas stage.
    3. Review of generating and focusing tools for the GI component.
  - C. Preparing for Action (PA)
    1. Developing Solutions Stage
    2. Building Acceptance Stage
    3. Review of generating and focusing tools for the PA component.
- III. Planning Your Approach to CPS
- A. Planning your approach.
  - B. Appraising Tasks
  - C. Designing Process
- IV. Review of the process and tools so far. Where you are individually, and what's next.

**Required text for one credit:**

- *Thinking Tool Guides: A Resource Kit for Teachers and Facilitators*, by Dr. Donald J. Treffinger and Carole Nassab, Published by the Center for Creative Learning, Sarasota, FL. \$24.95 from the Center for Creative Learning. This set can be seen and purchased through <http://www.creativelearning.com>. Click on "Creative Problem Solving."

***Suggested text for one credit:***

*Creative Problem Solving: An Introduction*, by Dr. Donald J. Treffinger and Scott Isaksen. Published by Prufrock Press, Texas. \$24.95 from either the Center for Creative Learning or Prufrock Press. (This book is not necessary if you are taking the class for 2-3 credits).

**Required text for 2-3 credits:**

- *Creative Approaches to Problem Solving: A Framework for Change*, by Scott G. Isaksen, K. Brian Dorval and Donald J. Treffinger, Published by Kendall-Hunt, Iowa. \$25.00 purchased through Wisconsin Creative Problem Solving office, Rm. 404, College of Professional Studies. Email Linda Rice ([lrice@uwsp.edu](mailto:lrice@uwsp.edu)) or Dr. Patricia Schoonover ([pschoono@uwsp.edu](mailto:pschoono@uwsp.edu)) if you want to pick it up or have it mailed. Checks are payable to UWSP-WCPSP. You can also use VISA or MasterCard.

*And,*

- *Thinking Tool Guides: A Resource Kit for Teachers and Facilitators*, by Dr. Donald J.

Treffinger and Carole Nassab, Published by the Center for Creative Learning, Sarasota, FL. This can be purchased through <http://www.creativelearning.com>. Again, click on “Creative Problem Solving.”

## **Brief Syllabus for 1, 2 and 3 Credit Modules for the Online**

### **Creative Problem Solving Course**

#### **Syllabus for one Credit (Online: Module One)**

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Students taking the course for one credit will understand the basic outline of the CPS Framework System. During the one credit module students will:

- Gain an understanding to the topic of Creativity. You will better understand what it means to you and what it means to others. You will learn to see the similarities and differences and to not only understand them, but appreciate them.
- VIEW will help you understand and appreciate your own style preferences towards creativity and change. It will also help you understand and appreciate the style preferences of others.
- Learn the guidelines for Generating Options
- Learn the guidelines for Focusing Options
- Understand what are tools and when to use them
- Learning how to use the tools
- Tips on choosing and applying the tools and other resources.

The main focus for one credit will be the tools and their application.

Those who wish to go further for two and three-credits will have additional activities, and readings. It is expected that all participants will find ways to personalize the process and to find ways to apply the tools both personally and professionally.

There are specific readings and activities. All activities are noted in the Content section of the CPS online course in Desire to Learn (D2L).

It is very important that students taking this course take some time to familiarize themselves with the D2L system. Practice downloading documents (Content area) and uploading files to the Drop box area. The Drop box area is where you will upload your files.

Keep a journal of your thoughts about what you are learning, wish to learn, or application of the tools. This is different from the insights I ask for. The journal is where you can write about your impressions about the course, what intrigues you as well as what puzzles you.

At the end of Module One there will be a brief quiz (online).

## **Syllabus for 2 Credits (Online: Module Two)**

### **Creative Problem Solving**

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To receive 2 credits students must complete the one-credit class requirements from Module One plus, they must:

- Do readings from Journals (these might be your own professional journals as well as others). Do a critique of 3 journal articles. The articles should apply somehow to your personal and/or professional interests.
- Do assigned readings from the textbook: Creative Approaches to Problem Solving. There are also activities that you will complete and upload to the Drop box area.
- Apply at least 3 generating tools and 3 focusing tools in some way. Record how the tools were applied and the result. The application of the tools can be done individually or with a group.
- Apply at least 1 component and its stages.
- The tools and stages can be implemented together to complete Module Two.
- Keep journaling! Your personal journal will help you think about your thinking whether you are thinking about the tools and process or about their application and your thoughts about the experience.
- There is a quiz (online) at the end of Module Two.

## **Syllabus for 3 Credits (Online: Module Three)**

### **Creative Problem Solving**

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To receive 3 credits the participant must complete the one and two credit class requirements plus, they must:

- Do assigned readings from the textbook: Creative Approaches to Problem Solving.
- Apply all generating and focusing tools in some way. Record how the tools were applied and the result. The application of the tools can be done individually or with a group.
- Read any suggested articles and find others.
- Keep a journal about progress with the CPS process and tools along with any concerns, issues, or thoughts you have as you use the process and tools.
- Final Project for Three Credits: Apply the CPS process with an individual, or a group and record how this was done, the component(s), stage(s) and tools used and the final result. Apply at least 3 generating tools and 3 focusing tools in some way. Record how the tools were applied and the result. The application of the tools can be done individually or with a group.

The final project cannot be something done last year, last month or last week. It must be a project that meets the requirements for needing the application of the CPS process (ownership, needs unique solution among other things). The project does not need to change the world, but if you have questions, please contact me and we'll discuss your ideas for the final project. You can work on your final project with a team of people or work alone. You can use a group to help you or, apply the process on your own.

Evaluation and grading will be done as the course progresses. The final project in Module Three will be evaluated and graded according to specific criteria. Criteria used to evaluate work for this module will include:

- How appropriate the plan of approach was implemented in relation to the issue or challenge.
- How the plan was accomplished and facilitated.
- The description of the generating and focusing tools applied,
- The description of the CPS process stages and components used.
- The student's evaluation of the experience by using an appropriate focusing tool.

## Grading

Grading for the course will be based upon the following:

- Attendance, participation and completion of work. While this is an online course, it is expected that you will be able to plan and carry out your assignments to complete the course on time. Attendance for an online course means that you will respond to my emails just as you expect me to respond to yours. It also means you will check the course site often to take part in the Discussion section of D2L and upload your files as you complete the assignments.
- Participation: Online discussion forums will be available for participants. This is not simply busy work, but a way of understanding each participant's view of the topics in the discussion forum. Often participants of the course have valuable insights that help others.
- Completion of work: It is expected that your work will be uploaded into the Drop box area in a timely fashion. If you have problems, I will accept work by email. The Drop box is preferable so that I can provide feedback and a grade as quickly as possible.
- Quality of work is important. Scores will be based not only on the rigor and quality of thinking that has gone into the work, but also on thoroughness. This includes care with grammar and spelling. If you use a word processing program, become acquainted with the Spelling and Grammar tools! American Psychological Association (APA) writing guide is used for writing style. [file:///Go to http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/apa4b.htm](http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/apa4b.htm).
- There will be surveys and online quizzes. These will help you understand what you know and help me to understand what you already understand and perhaps what you need to improve upon. Each assignment as it relates to the CPS Tools and CPS Process will be evaluated (and graded) based upon five levels of understanding: Expert, Accomplished, Competent, Novice, and Unprepared. Each assignment will be scored on a scale of 0-10 with 9 and 10 being Expert.
- Evaluation of Work. All work is carefully evaluated using one or two of the focusing tools, which are part of this course. I have found that using these tools helps me to remain objective and fair and, at the same time, provide more thorough feedback.
- Letter grades still need to be turned in and you want to know what they are! They are, using the 1-10 scale:

- o A = 8.5 to 10 (Accomplished to Expert)
- o B = 6.5 to 8 (Competent)
- o C = 4.5 to 6 (Novice)
- o D = 3.5 to 4 (Not Prepared)
- o F = 0 to 3 (Gotta be kidding!)