

<b>Initiative: Profiling Creative Problem Solving</b>
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**Project/Thesis Title: The Effects of a Master of Science in Creative Studies on its' Graduates.**

**Rationale and Questions:** The purpose of this work is to determine the impact of a Master of Science in Creative Studies on the current population of graduates from Buffalo State College. In depth interviews will be administered to five Creative Studies graduates with the purpose of answering the following questions:

- What changes are present in the personal lives of graduates as a result of the Creative Studies degree?
  - Do they look at problems in a different way?
  - Are they more/less receptive to ideas?
  - Do they make decisions differently?
  - How has the program affected their personal development?
- What changes have the Creative Studies graduates made to their professional lives?
  - How can they be attributed to the Creative Studies Program?
  - Are they positive or negative changes?
- What changes (if any) would they make to the program to make it more effective for them?
- How would their lives be different (personally or professionally) if they had not completed the program?

**Statement of Significance:** Nearly thirty years ago, researchers determined that creativity could be taught (1972). Further, a Master's project by Hedria Lunken (1990) determined that graduates were measurably impacted by the program. Sue Keller-Mathers (1990) and Louise Neilson (1990) have completed individual works on the impact of The Creative Problem Solving (CPS) method on students. These two studies showed the impact of a single graduate course on the students, which diminished over time. This work spurred other inquiries by DeSchryver (1992) and Hurley (1993) on CPS in other contexts.

The emphasis of this work will be to assess the impact of the Masters' of Science degree on Creative Studies graduates. How have Creative Studies graduates been impacted? Have they chosen different careers as a result of these experiences? Has the program changed their priorities or direction in life?

This research study will have significance for both the Center for Creative Studies and the field of Creativity. The Center will obtain critical information about how the program effects graduates, which can help them identify potential areas for improvement and successful components of the curriculum. The importance of this investigation is that it goes beyond past investigations that examined the impact of a single graduate course and studies the overall impact of the master's degree. Unlike the Lunken study, this

qualitative analysis will provide more in depth information about the perceptions of graduates. It will also focus on the current Creative Studies curriculum.

These results will help the Center improve credibility as a rigorous educational program. Data from graduates is the best measure of performance. If it can be demonstrated that the Creative Studies program has significant impact on graduates, then the field of Creativity can rely on the fruits of labor from those graduates and look to the Center as a critical resource. Also, information gathered from graduates can be used to further develop the curriculum.

**Description of the Method or Process:** Qualitative data will be gathered from in-depth open-ended interviews of five graduates of the Creative Studies Program. Qualitative data will provide depth and detail through direct quotation and careful descriptions (1987).

The interviews will be conducted individually and audiotaped, with the subject's approval. This will enable the interviewer to concentrate on conducting a thorough interview, using an interview guide (1978). The questions asked will be similar to Lunken's quantitative study, but the pure qualitative strategy of this study will allow for greater flexibility (1978).

Assistance from the Center for Studies in Creativity and the Office of Graduate Studies will be vital in helping to obtain the potential candidates for participation and approval for human subjects. The Creative Studies graduates will be selected from the last two to seven years so that the current curriculum is represented and the graduates have had some time for impact of the program to take effect. Using a Triangulation approach (1987), information rich cases will be used by selecting graduates that represent a cross section of professions (e.g. one teacher, one consultant, one businessperson, etc.) and sexes. All identities will remain confidential and data will be presented in such a way as to maintain anonymity.

After the interviews are completed, the data will be tabulated and analyzed. The qualitative data from the in-depth interviews will then be contrasted to earlier quantitative findings in the field of Creative Studies. Differences will be noted and easy to understand tables and charts will be included in the project/thesis to convey the results both graphically and in tabular form.

### **Learning Goals:**

- Understand how the Creative Studies program has affected students both professionally and personally. By understanding how others have used the program, I can get ideas about how I can use the program to grow.
- Prepare to use the degree more effectively in my own life.
- Decide how to integrate my Master's into my professional life. Will I consider a career change or will I integrate the work into my current profession (Marketing)?

### **Outcomes:**

- A comprehensive thesis that details previous work in this area as well as an analysis of the results of this qualitative study and conclusions for the graduate program.
- The information in the thesis can be used by the Center to market the program to prospective graduate students by better understanding its affect on students.

- The information can be used by the Center to determine any changes to the program that should be considered.
- An executive summary

**Timeline:**

Discuss with Advisor	Mar-00
Meet with Previous Contributors	Mar-00
Revise Concept Paper	Apr-00
Obtain Approval Concept Paper	May-00
Develop Preliminary Survey	Jun-00
Finalize Survey	Jun-00
Conduct Creative Studies Interviews	Jun-00
Conduct Interdisciplinary Interviews	Jul-00
Transcribe Audiotapes	Aug-00
Tabulate/Analyze Data	Oct-00
Write Thesis/Project	Dec-00

**Principal Investigator:** Faculty Advisor: Dr. Gerard Puccio  
 Student: Kristen Pinker  
 CS Graduate Students: From 1992 to 1999  
 Authors of Previous Work: Hedria Lunken, Sue-Keller Mathers  
 Cheryl Hurley, Luc DeSchryver & Louise Neilson.

**Related Literature:**

DeSchryver, Luc (1992). *An Impact Study of Creative Problem Solving Facilitation Training in an Organizational Setting*. Unpublished Masters’ Thesis, State University of New York, College at Buffalo.

Hurley, Cheryl A. (1993). *The Relationship Between the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Style and the Use of Creative Problem Solving*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, State University of New York, College at Buffalo.

Keller-Mathers, Susan. (1990). *Impact of Creative Problem Solving Training on Participants’ Personal and Professional Lives: A Replication and Extension*. *Unpublished Masters Thesis*, State University of New York, College at Buffalo.

Lunken, Hedria. (1990). *Assessment of Long Term Effects of the Masters of Science Degree in Creative Studies on it’s Graduates*. *Unpublished Masters Thesis*, State University of New York, College at Buffalo.

Neilson, Louise. (1990). *Impact of Creative Problem Solving Training: An in-depth evaluation of a six day course in Creative Problem Solving*. *Unpublished Masters Thesis*, State University of New York, College at Buffalo.

Parnes, S., Noller, R. (1972). Applied Creativity: The creative studies project-Part II: Results of the two year program. Journal of Creative Behavior, 6, 164-186.

Patton, Michael Q. (1987). How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: The Regents of the University of California.