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**Participate. Educate. Facilitate. Innovate.**

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**2013 ACTION TEAM REPORT**

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| **Team Name:** | **ToP and Creativity Team** |
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| **Team Members:** | Ann Epps, leadDennis Jennings,Cheryl Kartes, Cherie Lockett, Matt Rezac, Marti Roach, Eunice Shankland |
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| **2013 Accomplishments** |
| 3-Hour Facilitation for Innovation Workshop presented in Durham ToP gathering Jan 2013 by team members and at IAF NA conference in Orlando, June 2013 by Cheryl and AnnFacilitation for Innovation workshop approved as potential ToP course to be vetted by MMM Curriculum team, June, 2013 (Eunice and Ann at MMM retreat)One-day Inspiring Creativity course developed for Jan 2014 ToP Annual Gathering by Cheryl, Cherie, Eunice, Marti, and Ann based on research and work done by the larger ‘ToP and Creativity Team’ meeting from 2011-2012 |
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| **2013 Learnings/ Insights** |
| 1. Unleashing creativity within the “creativity team” was a complex adventure of learning, unlearning, acknowledging individual preferences, enabling collaborative work.
2. Working with creativity and innovation requires patience, openness, trust and willingness to risk one’s thoughts and emerging insights without meeting immediate judgment.
3. We are learning that innovation requires a deep belief in the innate gift of creativity and willingness to listen deeply to diverging ideas and finding a way to “fold the ideas into the creativity dough.” We have to be constantly watching for any “new chemical reactions” that catapult original thoughts into something new – the fruits of creative work, such as another view or a fresh synthesis. Putting form to new insights indicates that the ‘new’ is not just discovered, but will be utilized in a practical way.
4. One of the most important stages of creativity and innovation and yet most neglected in the sense that we prefer to rush through it, is “incubation.” It took us a couple of years and more to look, listen, jot down, experiment and finally to take a bold step to put together a prototype for the ToP community to experience and hopefully, in the spirit of collaboration, provide useful feedback and suggestions.
5. ToP Network is growing to be a fertile place that supports and challenges such initiatives, for the good of the many.
6. As someone said, I paraphrase: “even the most creative / innovative of us stand on the shoulders of others.” We are grateful for the incredible pool of wisdom that the ToP Network represents. We need to find ways to connect and enrich each other throughout a process of creation. There had been many others who have pushed us and gave us resources and great ideas in the past 2 years. Authorship only means that some of us stuck together to birth a “prototype product” enriched by the many.
7. In working collaboratively on Creativity matters, it is easier to operate in a divergent than a convergent mode. The swirl of new ideas tends to expand the insights and options making agreement on what to keep and what not to keep in the course difficult.
8. This course is a synthesis based on the team members’ experience and wide-ranging research. Creating this course has itself been an adventure in creativity and innovation.
9. In its current form the course is aimed to equip facilitators and trainers with concepts and tools to release creativity in groups.
10. The ToP Network privided funds for the logistics of getting the course team together for two retreats, which was well appreciated and critical to the success of the effort. The time commitment to do the development work was extensive and done on a volunteer basis by the team members. Continued investent of funds for the refinement of this course is needed, from the ToP Network, ICA and possibly other sources.
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| **2014 Anticipations**  |
| Piloting the one-day training on 13-14 Jan 2014, with ToP Network members in MN.Using feedback on the pilot to refine the content and modes of deliveryDeveloping a second day for the training – to create a two-day format.Developing a facilitator manual for use by those who will be conducting the courseOffering additional pilot sessions in 2014 and 2015 for on-going refinement and testingDeciding on copyrights / Creative Commons licence and acknowledgementsDeveloping a training delivery system including Training of Trainers, pricing etc. How do we locate funds for course development in the future? |
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| **Why you want other ToP Network Members to join you in your efforts:** |
| ToP Network sponsored this effort which was formed at the ToP Meeting in San Antonio. This is a continuing effort and contribution of the Network is critical in its development and offering. |
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**Submitted by:**