



## How to develop creative imagination? Assumptions, aims and effectiveness of Role Play Training in Creativity (RPTC)

Maciej Karwowski\*, Marcin Soszynski

Academy of Special Education, Creative Education LAB, Szczesliwicka 40 St., 02-353 Warsaw, Poland

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### ABSTRACT

There are hundreds of ways to develop creativity among children, youths and adults. Developing new ideas and ways of teaching creativity should also incorporate youth's interests and hobbies. The article presents the main information about the new way of developing creative abilities, especially creative imagination, the Role Play Training in Creativity (RPTC).

The conception of such training was inspired by RPG games. Forty-seven undergraduate education students (mainly women) voluntarily participated in the presented research. The training was conducted in two forms—1-day meeting (8 h) or four meetings 2 h each (totaling also 8 h). The effectiveness of training was evaluated with the use of two creativity tests – Urban & Jellen Test of Creative Thinking – Drawing Production (TCT-DP) and Kujawski Test of Creative Imagination (TCI). Comparison of post-test and pre-test results shows statistically significant increase of the results in TCT-DP and two of three TCI scales—fluency and originality.

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### 1. Introduction

Scarcely anyone questions the role of creativity in contemporary world. The mass of changes in technology, culture, as well as the growing complexity of the reality around make algorithmic obedience of common schemes and multiplication of activities that worked in the past be not enough in effective functioning. Greater and greater importance is assigned to abilities of individuals to actively create the reality that surrounds them—not only by creating eminent works or proposing new scientific solutions, but also by everyday creations, rendering the nearest environment more effective, as well as improving and modernizing whatever is around us.

What results from the above is a strong conviction that abilities and creative attitudes of individuals demand not just appreciation and recognition of significance, but also development by means of well thought-out impingements. The essence of education for creativity should lie in such construction of educational programs so as to be able to ensure the fullest possibilities of the development of their participants' creative potential.

Creativity training sessions conducted in various centers and based on various theoretical approaches seem for many years to have been the most popular form of activities that develop creativity in children.

Creativity trainings could be described as group exercises which are oriented at increasing participants' creative potential, understood both as creative abilities (divergent thinking, imagination, fluency, flexibility and originality of thinking), but also creative attitudes.

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [maciej.karwowski@pl.millwardbrown.com](mailto:maciej.karwowski@pl.millwardbrown.com) (M. Karwowski).

There are often two main areas of creativity trainings mentioned (Necka, 2001): (1) sessions of creative problem-solving—based on work with heuristics, tactics and strategies of creative problem-solving, and (2) creativity training which is concentrated on developing participants' creativity. Other authors propose different classifications of creativity trainings. Dobrołowicz (1995) proposes dividing such trainings into (1) abarictic training—based on fighting with barriers of creative functioning; (2) instrumental training—concentrated on solving particular problems; (3) personality trainings—strengthening personality traits important for creativity; (4) inventive training—developed for using inventive techniques.

In analyses conducted in Poland (Wiśniewska & Karwowski, 2007), eight main types of creativity trainings were identified: (1) imagination sessions; (2) divergent thinking trainings; (3) creative problem-solving techniques; (4) creativity trainings based on the arts; (5) verbal skills creativity trainings; (6) arttherapeutic training; (7) personality trainings.

There is a lack of a whole body of research that would confirm efficiency of creativity trainings, though one must mention ascertainments presented by Scott, Leritz and Mumford (2004). Those researchers selected 70 studies for analysis. They used data obtained on the basis of reviewing international peer reviewed journals as: *Journal of Creative Behavior*, *Creativity Research Journal*, *Roeper Review*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, and *Journal of Educational Psychology*. One should consider confirmation of the effectiveness of creativity training sessions as key. It proved that we are dealing with moderately strong, positive effect which indicates that the workshops really improve the creative capabilities of the participants. Problem-solving training sessions proved to be the most effective from among the singled types or creativity training areas, slightly overtaking the training sessions based on divergent thinking. The least effective were those sets of interactions whose aim was to change participants' personalities and make them more creative, which is no surprise considering the complexity of attitude change problems. It also proved that in case of the training sessions directed at developing divergent thinking, originality was developed most effectively, whereas the influence of the training sessions on developing flexibility and fluency was slightly weaker, and they least influenced the development of the ability to elaborate.

A value of the analyses presented by Scott et al. (2004) can be seen in the great detail of presented data, frequently forming a source of interesting conclusions. We find out that more effective were the training sessions realized in work than school conditions—presumably due to the reality of undertaken problems and adjustment of exercises to particular targets set forth by the occupation. For many trainers, an important finding was that the most effective training sessions were realized in small groups—which confirms a common truth that a group of maximum dozen or so people is an optimal one to work with.

Metaanalyses conducted on research conducted in Poland (Wiśniewska & Karwowski, 2007) show that the efficiency of creativity development programs is even greater—among the 137 identified effect measurements, an average clearly exceeded 1 ( $\Delta = 1.05$ ), which requires one to consider creativity training as an effective method for developing creativity of the participants. Most effective creativity trainings were those concentrated on developing children's imaginative skills, developed by Limont (1994, 1996)—based on Gordon's (1971) synectics, as well as Czelakowska's (2005) verbal skills creativity trainings strongly based on Freinet's techniques.

The aim of this article is to present assumptions as well as effectiveness of the new approach to training creativity—the Role Play Training in Creativity.

## 2. Role Play Training in Creativity (RPTC)

The Role Play Training in Creativity has been elaborated by the second of the authors, and the widely known Role Play Games, also known as games of imagination, formed inspiration for creating it. The essence of these games is typically based on the division of its participants into two groups. The first one is composed of players, or people who, in accordance with the rules of the game, create an imaginary character (protagonist) with the sole use of writing implements and imagination. The second group is most frequently composed of a single person, colloquially called a master of the game, who creates various types of adventures for the players (known as the team in the game). The whole of the game is played by the agency of spoken word and therefore the master of the game tells a story as seen from the perspective of created characters. It is the players, impersonating the characters they have chosen, who describe what they are doing, sometimes also using movement, gestures, etc.

In creating the described Role Play Training in Creativity—an attempt to transfer some of the rules encountered in Role Play Games for the needs of creativity training was made. Thanks to that, we managed to create a training session that fulfils a number of fundamental assumptions: (1) it stimulates imagination; (2) it ignites intrinsic motivation in the participants; (3) it keeps the natural atmosphere of the game.

When creating exercises, we were guided by the set of intellectual operations, proposed by Finke, Ward, and Smith (1992) and Necka (1987) that participate in the creative process. That is why the training session we propose contains the following stimulating exercises: deductive and inductive thinking, metaphor using, mental transformations as well as associative thinking.

The main aim of the Role Play Training in Creativity is to develop participants' creativity, by: (1) development of imagination; (2) change of convictions about creativity; (3) development of a capability for constructive criticism; (4) realization of the role of imagination in the process of creative problem-solving; and (5) stimulation of intellectual operations that play a role in creative thinking.

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