Exploring the Relationships between Problem Solving and Psychological Climate – *Scott G. Isaksen (Creativity and Innovation), Creativity Research Unit, The Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc. (USA)*

Richard Florida (2002), a popular US economist, presented the argument that place is the key economic and social organizing unit of our time, and asserts that future models for economic growth need to focus on technology, talent, and tolerance. Technology includes innovation and concentration of high-tech industry. Talent is the number of people in creative occupations – creative capital. Tolerance is about places that are open and tolerant having an edge in attracting different kinds of people. Implied in these three areas is the interaction of people and place or person-environment fit.

The purpose of this paper is to approach the larger person-environment fit issue within an operational framework of creativity and innovation. The concept of behavior being a function of both the person and the environment has its roots in the work of Lewin (1936; 1951). Sternberg and Vroom (2002) put forth a more recent focus within this issue. They exchanged points of view regarding the importance of the person-environment issue within the context of leadership.

The person-environment issue has a strong basis in our current ecological approach to creativity research (Isaksen, Puccio & Treffinger, 1993). An ecological approach to creativity research must include consideration of not just the methods and results, but also the people and context. The more practical application of this program of research focuses on taking a systemic approach to organizational innovation and transformation (Isaksen & Tidd, 2006).

There are many and varied approaches to understanding the characteristics of creative people. A current trend is to examine style as well as level of creativity. Drawing on research done within the Cognitive Styles Project (Isaksen, 2004), Selby, Treffinger, Isaksen & Lauer (2004) have offered a new assessment of problem solving style. For the purposes of this study, VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style will be used to examine people's preferences for how they deal with change, process information, and make decisions. The environment or situation will be examined by using the Situational Outlook Questionnaire, an outgrowth of the Creative Climate Project (Isaksen, Ekvall, Wilson, Gaulin & Akkermans, 2006).

Previous research within both the Cognitive Styles Project and the Creative Climate Project will be reviewed, with a particular focus on earlier examinations between cognitive style and individual perceptions of the climate for creativity. New and preliminary results will be shared using VIEW and the SOQ, along with some tentative implications for future research and practice.

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