

## A Curriculum for the Creative Imagination

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### Introduction

After World War II the ideas and practices of progressive educators such as John Dewey and L. S. Vygotsky were sidelined by theories of development that privileged the cognitive intelligences. Jean Piaget believed that the symbolic thinking of children was a passing phase, and that mature thought should be rational and relatively free of symbolic expressions (Piaget, 1962, 289), and Jerome Bruner, a disciple of Piaget, warned against arousing unconscious, creative impulses in children, referring to such approaches as “pedagogical romanticism” (Bruner, 1966, 147). Resisting the tide of cognitivism, educators in the 1960s and 1970s emphasized the domains of feelings, values, and creativity in what came to be called organismic, holistic, or confluent education (e.g., Jones, 1968, Werner, 1963). Then in the 1980s the notion of intelligence was diversified greatly and popularized by Howard Gardner’s system of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999). But Gardner’s system is based in cognitive science and on a product-oriented notion of creativity and thus pays little or no attention to the creative process as such, and excludes what we may call the “pre-cognitive” intelligences. This falls in with a general tendency to focus on critical thinking and outcomes-based learning and to impose standardized testing at an increasingly young age. The computational theory of mind finds no room for the intelligences of the imagination, community, and spirituality.

A career of teaching in the area of fine arts at various universities made me aware of the need for a course on the deep structure of the creative process. I designed a program titled Foundations of Creative Imagination and offered it for the first time in 1984. It was given

through the department of fine arts in the school of part-time studies at York University (Toronto). Assisted by a team of instructors, I gave the course every year or two during the next decade. Basic concepts of the course were incorporated into the curriculum for the B.Ed. in Fine Arts Education, which was instituted at York in 1995. The course was also given to candidates for the M.Ed. degree.

The course had some unexpected consequences. In 1993 an exercise in activating the imagination developed in the course was incorporated in an installation at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In the intervening decade 1400 visitors to the installation have left cards recording their experiences with a painting. The course arouses strong feelings of community in the group, but the class of 1995 was exceptional in this respect. They bonded so strongly that they decided to continue meeting after the course was over. Though the membership has changed somewhat, the group is now an ongoing community of artists, poets, and teachers that calls itself The Milkweed Collective. Eight years later the Collective continues to meet at least four times a year, presents public shows of art-work, and provides workshops on creativity to school children and adults. The group has given the workshop Exploring Art-work in Depth to several hundred school children in the Toronto area in the last three years. Twelve members of the group collaborated with the author in writing a book about the curriculum and its effects (Clarkson, et alia). This essay provides an overview of the curriculum and offers suggestions for applications in elementary and secondary classrooms.

### The Curriculum

The course can be summarized in the following twelve concepts: (1) Creativity is a drive that directs each person on the path of individuation, the actualization of his or her innate potential. (2) The creative imagination mediates the primary process of the unconscious and the secondary

process of conscious ego awareness by engaging the tertiary process. (3) The tertiary process is a conduit for emergent symbolic images and felt meanings that have an adaptive, homeostatic, life-fulfilling tendency. (4) Symbolic images are complex entities that combine sense data and intuitions, feelings and thoughts, memories and incipient portents; interpreting such images calls for developing the intelligence of the imagination. (5) Knowledge of symbolic forms from various cultures past and present fosters the symbolic attitude, an attitude that understands meaningful correspondences between the inner world of personal symbols and the outer world of cultural symbols. (6) Working at a deep level of the creative process results in the emergence of archetypal figures that have adaptive value as personal guides for the individuation process. (7) The cycle of the creative process involves the de-integrative phase that destabilizes the given condition, and the integrative phase that forms the new condition. (8) The ritual process is cognate in structure to the creative process; self-created rituals situate the creative process in a communal context and may evoke a spontaneous quality of spirituality in the group. (9) Communicating personal images in expressive media fosters confidence in the uniqueness of the individual's creativity, the ability to communicate by means of symbolic images, and trust in the group as a safe container for the process. (10) Engaging the deep structure of the creative process activates the pre-cognitive intelligences of the imagination, community, and spirituality. (11) Personality type identifies the individual creative style, the type of projects the individual prefers, and how he or she carries them out; it also identifies the particular challenges each type is likely to encounter along the way. (12) Associating personality type with archetypal figures promotes understanding of the dynamic nature of the individuation process, appreciation of difference in others, and mutuality within the community.

In the two-semester format, a class of between 20 and 30 students meets once a week for twenty-six weeks. The classroom is large enough to have one area with a circle of chairs for

presentations and discussions and another cleared of furniture for exercises in creativity. Some sessions take place in an art gallery, in a dance studio, and outdoors in a woods. The four-hour meetings usually begin with discussions of assigned readings and presentations on the topic of the day. After a break come the exercises and time for processing the results. At the end of the evening a few minutes are set aside for the students to record responses in their journals.

Although the curriculum is tightly structured, great latitude is given in responding to exercises and assignments. In the two-semester version, the course is taught by a team, with specialists in body movement, visual art, the structure of the psyche, and the symbolism of myths and fairy tales. In the one-semester format, the curriculum is abbreviated, and I teach the course alone.

We use many media: drawing, painting, and tissue-paper collage; writing poems and stories; movement, singing, and playing musical instruments; making masks and constructing installations. Students familiar with one medium find that they are more or less beginners in another, which shifts the emphasis from expertise in the medium to the creative process itself. Those with little background in art may feel intimidated, but soon find that they are viewing their work as sources of new and meaningful images and not critiquing them as works of art. The word 'art' rarely comes up during the course.

The principal assignment for the first semester is a research essay on an image that has appeared spontaneously to the student, usually during an exercise in the class. Very often they find that choosing the image is a reciprocal process. The image of a bunny kept appearing to one student, but she thought that a bunny was too cute and cuddly to be a worthwhile topic. Then she had a dream in which a bunny came to her and said, now that she has dreamed of a bunny she can use it as her image. Which she did. The students research the cultural meanings of their image in many sources and discover the personal meanings in various creative exercises. At the end of the first semester they write an essay on the correspondences between the personal

associations and cultural amplifications of their image. The second semester is organized around a mask project which lasts for several weeks. Working in pairs the students make plaster of Paris masks. While decorating the mask, it is addressed as the Other so that its identity is left open. The students dialogue with the masks, write poems and songs for the masks, construct an environment for the masks, and design rituals for the masks. One evening the students bring costumes and dress up as the masks. The coming-out party for the masks ends with a lively dance. This provides a rich reservoir of material for the final performances. The course concludes with each student giving a twenty-minute performance or show of work in which the masks play crucial roles. The final essay documents how the creative process unfolded through the year.

The students were for the most part completing undergraduate degrees as fine arts majors. Many had been working on their degrees part-time for several years, as they had families and full-time jobs. Several were school teachers finishing second degrees. The median age was usually between 35 and 40. At the last meeting the students filled out evaluation forms. The comments were generally most enthusiastic and were helpful in pointing out ways in which the course could be improved. I should now like to present in more detail some of the concepts and practices on which the curriculum is based.

### Activating the Imagination and the Symbolic Attitude

The Foundations course is an immersion program in the language of the imagination. Images are regarded as possibly having an aspect that is undefined and not-yet-known. If an image is a sign, its meaning is defined, but if an image has a potentially emergent meaning, it is regarded as a symbol. For Whitmont, “The symbolic approach can mediate an experience of something indefinable, intuitive or imaginative, or a feeling-sense of something that can be known or

conveyed in no other way, since abstract terms do not suffice everywhere” (Whitmont, 1969, 16). The recognition of the unknown factor is usually accompanied by surprise, aha! a shock, a sense of discovery. The literal attitude seeks to pin down the meaning immediately, but the symbolic attitude reserves judgement as to the meaning of an expression until its effects have been lived with for some time. The course teaches students how to “backpack” symbolic images until they reveal their full load of meaning. One student wrote a poem four years after the course was over in which she realized the full meaning of a dream that she had had two years before the course began.

Many methods have been developed to access the deeper levels of the psyche, including trance states and all kinds of mind-altering drugs. But activating the imagination requires no artificial means. Hans Arp recorded his dreams and in 1915 began to paint and do spontaneous collages drawn from the simplest forms, which he called concrete art, “for nothing is more concrete than the psychic reality that it expresses” (Arp, 1966, 232). At about the same time and in the same city of Zürich, Carl Jung was developing a method for activating the imagination for therapeutic purposes. He induced a meditative or presentational state of awareness in order to “lower the conscious level.” Unconscious contents would flow into consciousness through expressive media of drawing, body movement, and automatic writing. He named the activated imagination the transcendent function, for it transcends the standpoints of consciousness and the unconscious. Applying the method in his medical and psychiatric practice he found that the transcendent function generates a life process that expresses itself in images out of which arise new conscious attitudes. “For here the conscious and the unconscious flow together into a common product in which both are unified. Such a fantasy can be the highest expression of a person’s individuality, and it may even create that individuality by giving perfect expression to its unity” (Jung, 1971, 428).

The study of the threshold zone between conscious and unconscious functioning was advanced by D. W. Winnicott, who posited a “transitional” or “intermediate” area of experience, which the child inhabits and which is retained through life as the realm of intense experience associated with creativity (Winnicott, 1971, 16). Silvano Arieti referred to the state that links the primary process of the unconscious with the secondary process of consciousness as the tertiary process: “The tertiary process, with specific mechanisms and forms, blends the two worlds of mind and matter, and, in many cases, the rational with the irrational. Instead of rejecting the primitive (or whatever is archaic, obsolete, or off the beaten path), the creative mind integrates it with normal logical processes in what seems a ‘magic synthesis’ from which the new, the unexpected, and the desirable emerges.” (Arieti, 1976, 186).

Through a series of exercises that activate the imagination, the students become adept at engaging the tertiary process to produce the “magic synthesis.” When focused, conscious awareness is relaxed, things that appear to be distinct in the ordinary, space-time world begin to blur. Sense modalities--vision, hearing, touch, bodily sensations, spatial perceptions, etc.--flow together in surprising combinations. The border between mind and body begins to dissolve, which accounts for states of awareness referred to as somatic knowing, cellular responses, and subtle body phenomena. Symbolic images take on a life of their own and are often accompanied by powerful feelings. The exercises produce a sense of fulfillment, abundance, revelation, and even awe. The state is often described as spiritual.

The exercises show students in easy stages how to engage the tertiary process. In the first meeting the students make a collage by selecting sheets of colored tissue paper, tearing them into pieces and pasting them onto sheets of cardboard with paint brush and white glue. The students gather around a table covered with many stacks of colored papers and are invited to touch the colors with their fingers and sense their different qualities and energies. They are reminded that

everyone responds to colors differently. It is suggested that they let the colors choose them just as much as they choose the colors, that selecting is a mutual activity. They are encouraged to be playful and spontaneous, to let accidents happen and avoid making known forms. The prospect of having to “do art” makes some apprehensive, and their fears increase when the collages are put up for viewing. Anxiety subsides when it becomes clear that they are viewing the collages receptively, as harbingers of new meanings rather than as objects of critical judgement. The colors, shapes, and designs take imaginal form. One student recognizes a large blue area as the figure of a panther, which becomes the main image for her year’s journey. Another collage has a patch of red that leads to the image of Little Red Riding Hood, then to the story of a fox, and finally to the guiding figure of Aphrodite. The pink that dominates a third collage cradles that student in mother energy. The collages from that first evening remarkably point the way to what is to unfold during the next eight months.

That same evening we introduce the Book of Changes, the ancient Chinese book of wisdom. Also known as the I Ching, it is an oracle based on a system of sixty-four symbolic images. The collage explores the realm of personal images, while the I Ching presents a symbol system that has been practiced by millions of people for thousands of year. We explain the principles on which the I Ching is based and the method of consulting it. Each student formulates a question, then throws three coins six times and scores the throws to obtain one of the sixty-four hexagrams. They read the texts of the hexagrams and are amazed at how meaningful and pertinent the readings are. They are then asked whether they can find any correspondences between their collage and their hexagram. There is no possible logical connection between making a collage and consulting the I Ching, and yet several students see meaningful links. Even a few such “hits” put in question the rational attitude that depends on the causal principles of the ordinary space-time world. It becomes evident that the creative imagination must be open to the

acausal order of synchronous and non-local events.

The I Ching also serves as a model of the principle of complementarities that underlies the course (Figure 1). As Yin-chi (the dark principle) and Yang-chi (the light principle) interflow, they may be in harmonious equilibrium or absolutely opposed. As Yin and Yang mutually increase and decrease, there comes a point when they transform into the other and the cycle reverses from the clockwise to the counter-clockwise phase. This provides a powerful model for the two phases of the creative process, the de-integrative phase, in which the current condition is broken down, and the integrative phase, which brings the new condition into being. Jung saw an important analogy between the interplay of Yin and Yang and the compensatory relation between the unconscious and consciousness (Jung, 1967). In his edition of the I Ching Rudolf Ritsema affirms that “using a divinatory system is an exploration of the unconscious side of a situation. The symbols evoked adjust the balance between you and the unknown forces behind it” (Ritsema, 1995, 16). The I Ching provides a paradigm for the operations of the creative imagination, and it is one of the texts for the course (Anthony, 1988). The students consult the book on their own as they wish.

The second meeting introduces the basic exercise for activating the imagination. We meet in a campus art gallery, and the students walk through the show until they find a work that attracts them. They sit down in front of it and are led through the 15-minute exercise, *Exploring Art-work in Depth* (Clarkson, 1995, 23-24; Clarkson & Worts). The exercise begins with a period of relaxation and focusing that induces a state of reverie. The exercise is as non-directive as possible, and thus differs from various techniques of so-called “guided imagery” that direct participants to engage with specific images in order to achieve certain therapeutic effects. The participants focus on the art-work and scan it all over slowly. They are asked to close their eyes and see the art-work in their imagination. When we give the program to school children, we ask

them to pretend they have a TV screen inside their heads and to imagine seeing the art-work on the screen. Imagining the art-work begins a process of mental bonding and the formation of a highly charged, inter-subjective field between the viewer and the imagery of the painting. The viewers are asked to locate a spot in the painting that attracts them and imagine going to that spot. They are asked to look around from that spot, sense the temperature, listen for sounds, feel the textures, and then move about and explore the scene. This calls into play many sense-modalities that serve to intensify the imaginal bond with the art-work. Participants are then asked to choose a color, imagine being bathed in a light of that color, and note the feelings that color brings. They are asked to choose a shape, imagine becoming that shape, and moving about as the shape. The exercise concludes with giving viewers a minute to let the imagination play freely. The exercise usually produces insights and powerful feelings that seem authentic and new .

Students record the experience with oil pastels and paper and then share what happened in the group. They become aware of the wide range of responses evoked by such exercises, and of how meaningful they are to each individual. There seems to be no apparent rhyme or reason connecting these initial exercises, but they are fascinating and seem to have beneficial effects. Puzzlement gives way to intense interest when the emergent images and feelings begin to reveal distinctive and recurrent patterns. Another indication that the inner and outer worlds are entering into a productive partnership is the release of powerful energies for the work. Several students comment that during the early weeks they felt strong motivation for the course without really knowing why. As they become accustomed to activating the imagination, they look forward to the exercises as a means of discovering new and surprising images.

There comes a moment sooner or later when students realize that a previously hidden world has opened up. This results in an irreversible shift of the cognitive standpoint. The ego becomes more flexible and permeable as it responds to the contents emerging from deep in the psyche.

When conscious awareness opens up to pre-cognitive processes, it becomes more flexible and open to the symbolic images that flow in from many sources. In tandem with the exercises we study the structure of the psyche according to Jung, providing examples from the analysis of myths, fairy tales, modern fiction, films, etc. The students are eager to learn the vocabulary and grammar of the language of images and become more observant of events taking place in their daily lives for clues to their unfolding creative process. As one student put it, “outer events quite beyond our conscious control seem to correspond to and give form to unconscious trends that are striving towards expression.” Another wrote that learning how to track images and engage them through dialogue and active imagination showed that they could speak through a body-knowing. A third student said that at first he did not identify with any images, then he identified with all images, and now he has found a middle way of “walking in the field of images.” And a fourth wrote that she now realizes the power of imagery to carry messages not available in other forms, and that it was a major breakthrough to learn how to let herself be spontaneous, express emotions directly, and validate them without first attaching a thought (usually tinged with fear or judgment).

### Archetypal Images

Jung’s concept of the archetype is comparable to the fundamental dynamisms that are postulated in many fields of enquiry--the innate releasing mechanisms of ethology, the behavioral systems of evolutionary psychology, the algorithms of cognitive science, the deep structures of linguistics, and the genetically transmitted response strategies of sociobiology (Stevens, 1995, 126-132). According to Anthony Stevens, “Whether one calls these psychological adaptations archetypes or algorithms, both cognitive science and analytical psychology conceive of them as built-in assumptions that certain typical figures (e.g., mother,

child, stranger, mate) and certain physical features (water, shelter, edible substances) will be encountered in the social and ecological environment.” Archetypes appear to have an autonomous energy “which they seek to achieve in the psyche (in the form of images, symbols, and myths), in the personality (in the form of complexes), and in outer reality (in the form of behavior).” Their survival value lies in their ability to further fitness, adaptation, and growth, which Jung subsumed under the concept of individuation process (ibid, 94-97). That the archetypal images that appear spontaneously from activating the imagination have adaptive value is confirmed by the fact that the students accept them as authentic expressions of the core of the personality, which Jung referred to as the Self. Dialoguing with these images establishes communication between the cognitive ego and the pre-cognitive Self, in the course of which the ego learns to become less one-sided and more responsive to whatever is Other.

The concept of archetypes is introduced after the students have been immersed in symbolic images for several weeks. They encountered the archetypes of color in the first meeting, when they made collages, after which colors began to take on particular characters and powers. One student cut her finger at home on a piece of glass and a poem flowed out on Redness as the life force. For another, whose image was the Black Madonna, black became “darkness of unknowable depth.” Green connected a third student to the Earth, the life of the instincts, and the viriditas of Hildegard of Bingen. During the next few meetings we present the archetypes of the stone, the tree, and the forest. The students bring a stone to class and tell its story as though the stone itself is speaking. As a cultural symbol a stone represents cohesion and harmonious bonding with the Self; its hardness and durability signifies resistance to change, decay, and death. A whole stone connotes unity and strength, while a broken stone signifies dismemberment, disintegration, and infirmity (Cirlot, 1962, 299-300). The stone stories weave together primordial meanings with personal meanings. One stone is pregnant with potential, as if

inside it the whole universe is waiting to be discovered. Another is incomplete, bearing scars of separation, and in search of wholeness. A third came from the ancestral home of Scotland, and though it is small and insignificant, it is useful to others. Several weeks later the students re-read their stone stories as though they are autobiographies and are amazed that the stones have told them their own stories but from another perspective than that of the ego. The stone was telling them their story from the more primordial, inclusive, and archetypal perspective of the Self.

The next evening we assemble in a woodlot on the campus, and the students wander about looking for a tree that attracts them. Sitting beside the tree, they enter a meditative state and wait for the images the activated imagination will bring. They stay for an hour, then return to the classroom and record the experience in a collage or a drawing and an entry in their journal. One student sees the image of a bear mask in the tree, which becomes her guiding image. Another merges blissfully with her tree, which tells her of the inner strength that comes from connectedness with all of life and of the wisdom that is available to those who seek and ask. A fallen tree with new shoots growing from it provides an experience of death and rebirth. As an archetypal image the forest is the unknown, while the tree signifies the cycle of life, growth, nutritive and degenerative processes. With roots in the underworld, the trunk in the here and now, and the crown reaching up to the upper world, the tree also signifies the world axis and the totality of the psyche, while the forest symbolizes the unconscious and the not-yet-known (Cirlot, 1962, 107, 328-332). In subsequent meetings, exercises in body movement and music further the exploration of the archetypal realm and the dialogue between the ego and the Self. After the course is well under way students find that the creative process is beginning to work spontaneously. One student finds herself shooting photographs without knowing why, only to find later that they have become core images for her process. Another kept seeing blue jays during the week, and when she chose the image of the blue jay for an active imagination

exercise, it transformed into an Eagle, which became the principal guide for her year's journey.

To enrich the vocabulary of symbols available to the students, the class divides into groups to make presentations on traditional symbol systems from various cultures: Astrology, Alchemy, the Tarot, Kundalini Yoga, and the Native Medicine Wheel. When the symbolic attitude is well established, students pick up images from many sources and feed them into the creative process. Gradually the students discover that learning the language of the imagination takes as much painstaking practice as any language.

### Personality Type and Creativity

Building on the typological scheme of William James, Jung developed a theory of personality that has become very widely applied. He posited three polarities that are identified by capital letters: Attitude (Introversion-Extraversion), Perceiving (Sensation-Intuition), and Judging (Thinking-Feeling) (Jung, 1971). The energy of Introverts, he noted, flows mainly to the inner world of ideas and feelings, while that of Extraverts flows mainly to the outer world of people and things. A preference for information from the physical senses of hearing, vision, touch, smell and proprioception marks Sensate perception, while a preference for information from hunches, insights, fantasy, and "the sixth sense" marks intuitive perception. Preference for evaluating information logically, rationally, and objectively marks Thinking judgement, while preference for evaluation information empathically, personally, and affectively marks Feeling judgement. Based on the three polarities, Jung came up with eight types. Katharine Cook Briggs and Isobel Briggs Myers added a fourth polarity to indicate whether extraversion is dominated by a Perceiving or a Judging function. This expanded Jung's system to sixteen types, which they incorporated in the widely used Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers, 1993). The sixteen types of the MBTI are usually arrayed in rows and columns as in Figure 2a, but they can also be displayed in

compass form, as in Figure 2b. The circular diagram shows Jung's eight types in the inner ring and the sixteen MBTI types in the outer ring. The circular form makes it easy to locate the pairs of types that are opposed to each other. The theory holds that type is a given of the personality and remains relatively stable through time. This was confirmed when eleven members of the fifth cohort of the Foundations course did the MBTI again six years later and their scores remained virtually unchanged.

Once the students are familiar with personality type, they find that it helps them to value their particular type of creativity and to take responsibility for their special gifts (Myers, 1980). Getting to know one's type and how it differs from that of one's classmates results in many amusing and a few tense interactions. Extraverts prefer to work in large groups, while Introverts prefer to work alone; Thinking types prefer conceptual approaches, while Feeling types are happiest helping people. Sensing types prefer to work with subject matter from the here and now, while iNtuitives are fascinated by the far-out and fantastic. Type becomes a factor in appreciating the uniqueness of each individual and in the mutual understanding needed to build community.

Each individual has all the functions, but the proportions vary according to their type. A thinking type will have Thinking as the dominant function and Feeling as the inferior function, while Sensing and iNtuition will be their auxiliary functions. Perhaps the most challenging task of the program is to get in touch with the inferior function, the function that is opposite in type to the dominant function and hence least developed. Because the inferior function is so primitive, it lies closest to the unconscious and hence is connected to the creative source. The range, richness, intensity, and originality of the final presentations is evidence of how fully participants have engaged all the functions of their personality.

Towards the end of the program we present a schema that links eight of the archetypes to the

eight personality types (Beebe, 1990). Four combinations support the ego standpoint, while four are opposed (Figure 3). The positive aspect of the dominant function is the Warrior (Hero/Heroine), while the negative aspect is the Opposing Personality. The positive aspect of the auxiliary function is the supportive parent (Mother/Father), while the opposed function is associated with the negative parent (Witch/Senex). The positive aspect of the tertiary function is the Child (Puer/Puella), to which is opposed the Trickster. The inferior function is associated with the Anima or Animus, the positive aspect of which is the Beloved and the negative, the Demonic Personality. Having worked with personality type and with archetypes through the program, the students assign images of their own choosing to various positions of Beebe's model, and some make additional masks to represent those figures. They discover how the full range of functions and archetypes work within each individual and so gain a dynamic and developmental perspective of the psyche.

As the individuation process unfolds during the academic year, archetypal figures often emerge in a particular sequence. The Trickster usually enters early to challenge the status quo with its disruptive, antinomian energies. Sooner or later an image of the Child, the positive aspect of the Trickster, appears to signal the birth of the new condition. The Warrior generally follows to empower the Child to claim its place in the world. Parental wisdom figures may appear early to establish a safe environment for the forthcoming struggle, or the negative aspects of the Parents may enter in an attempt to foil the individuation process. In the course of time the Anima or Animus shows up. Masks may take on multiple roles and so bring into conscious awareness the complexity of the psyche and what it means to integrate its many parts into a richer understanding of the whole personality.

### The Cycle of the Creative and Ritual Processes

The first half of the course takes one pass through the cycle of the creative process, while the second half takes the cycle deeper. We discuss the creative process in the well-known four stages of preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (Wallas, 1926, 87). The first and last stages (preparation and verification) engage the secondary process, while the second and third stages (incubation and illumination) engage the primary and tertiary processes. We discuss the difference between the directed, purposeful energy of the conscious stages and the feelings of doubt, frustration, and even depression of the incubation stage. They begin to understand that the time of waiting in the incubation stage is as natural a part of the creative process as the productive stage, and that it is essential to wait until the new image breaks through to initiate the final phase of the project. The moment of the breakthrough happens differently for each student, but when it occurs they experience a rush of creative energy. Everything seems to come together as they prepare for the final presentations. They find that they can give up trying to work out problems intellectually and instead put their trust in the confluence of conscious and unconscious forces in the tertiary process.

The theme of ceremony and ritual is touched on informally throughout the program. At times of public holidays—Thanksgiving (Harvest Festival), Halloween (Saowain, The Day of the Dead), the Winter Solstice (Christmas, New Year), etc.--we discuss their history and symbolism. Then near the end of the course we study the structure of the ritual process according to the anthropologist Victor Turner (Turner, 1987:4-19). We investigate self-created rituals for important life-events and transitions--birth, childhood to adulthood, marriage, separation or divorce, recovery from illness, mid-life to old age, and death (Hine, 1987, 304-326). The task is to design rituals for the masks that combine aspects of both the sacred and the profane. Some students who were raised in religious households have difficulty with the topic of ritual. They think that rituals are phony and unrelated to the lives people actually lead. After the course one

such student realized that ritual was one of the components of the course that she valued most highly. She commented that each class meeting embodied a sense of ritual, and that the ceremony of completion that brought the last evening to a close was especially meaningful.

Turner noted that the liminal phase of the ritual process generates a sense of homogeneity and comradeship that dissolves social divisions of rank and class so that all participants feel entitled to membership in the group. He found that ritual forms a community of equal individuals that has about it a quality of sacredness, which he called “existential or spontaneous *communitas*” (Turner, 1969, 94-96, 132). Attention to ritual brings the individual’s creative process into a social context and constellates a strong, even sacred sense of community in the group. The last three meetings of the course are given to the final presentations. It is a time of intense anticipation, adventure, risk-taking, and important discoveries. What until then has been largely a personal journey becomes a shared enterprise. Each presentation takes on the aspect of a rite of passage that affirms the bond between the individual and the witnessing community. Several presentations involve others members of the class, and sometimes the whole class is asked to take part. The students become each others’ teachers. Whether as witness or performer, almost every participant discovers some new knowledge that marks the beginning of the next stage in their journey. By the end of the program several feel the need for further study and write in the course evaluations that they wish they could do the course over again, or could pursue the subject at a more advanced level. The formation of the ongoing group in part met the need for further study.

### Summary

The final presentations of the fifth cohort were exceptionally rich and powerful. Three weeks later the students wrote statements about the course for the catalogue of an art show in which the

class presented its work. A selection of their statements provides a summary of what the students felt they had gained and what made the course special in their experience. I would like to present this by way of providing an overview of the effects of the program:

- On creativity as a drive common to all individuals and not a special gift accorded to a few:

“Since every human being has the capacity and ability to develop creatively, this course provided valuable insight in order for everyone to recognize their potential, individuality, and creativity. I personally gained understanding and the encouragement to create what I feel or think.”

- On the attitude to emergent images and the evocation of a special quality of community:

“Being on the edge of discovery at every moment, waiting for something new to emerge, to surprise, to bring to wholeness and to bring us into communion with one another, this course put me in touch with the sacredness of the creative process, and of the space created.”

- On activating the imagination to connect to the authentic Self: “The creative process is a spiritual path to becoming who we truly are. This class provided a safe environment for me to connect with the deep self, the creator who is fully and originally myself.”

- On the interplay of the opposites: “The explanation of the yin-yang symbol shifting to the opposite when one of the two sides reaches its maximum was helpful to me to understand the cycles of light and darkness, consolation and desolation, life and death (cycles of life) as well as in the creative process. I love the process of creativity, allowing mistakes to occur, to be open to possibilities.”

- On how unlocking creative potential leads to an experience of wholeness, though the process can be difficult and even painful: “This course has shown me the key that can open up my unconscious and see the potential of the creative mind. It has given me the confidence to confront and understand my creative potential and therefore my true self. For many years I had either neglected the ‘real self’ or lacked the confidence in myself to follow the true path for my

future growth and existence. It is truly a wonderful feeling to be united as a whole person, balanced and strong. This does not mean that growth and pain have been eliminated. It means that growth, pain, and the creative force are now to be harnessed for the beginning (rebirth) of a new journey.”

- On life’s journey as a metaphor for the individuation process; the importance of the ability to interpret symbolic images as meaningful in both their inner and outer, personal and collective aspects: “I have gained a deep appreciation and respect for the workings of the psyche and how it connects our inner and outer worlds. I have received an exciting gift of insight, understanding, and compassion for the human spirit. This course was extraordinary from the start and is still not finished. It is the journey of life.”

- On how the creative process, once initiated, takes on a life of its own: “This course has started me on a journey I didn’t know I needed to take, but once begun, it is one that I cannot deny or leave--even with all the ups and downs, light and dark, joy and sorrow that have been encountered--until that journey is complete. Unique opportunities for creative expression within a protected, caring environment have allowed my outer self to get in touch with my inner self, to grow in knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Truly a celebration of the creative process that is within each of us!”

- On how the course was over-loaded with material, very demanding, and yet worth the effort: “We were intensely challenged; unmercifully driven; and incredibly supported. This course was a GIFT!!!!”

The leading themes are of the journey of life, the individuation process, relating the inner and outer worlds, discovering the authentic self, identifying one’s creative potential, learning how to manage the creative process, and evoking a spiritual sense of community. Together these comments indicate that they regarded this course as having filled an important gap in their

education. As many of the students in the course were teachers, they proceeded to apply aspects of the program in their own classrooms.

### Applications in the Middle and High School Classroom

Teachers have provided reports on how the course affected them and how they adapted elements of the program. They introduced variously the topics of personality type, active imagination exercises, spontaneous art-making, mask projects, and the study of symbolism and archetypes in the regular curriculum. They comment on how activating the imagination helps children to focus, concentrate, and stay on task, even those with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders and who are learning disabled.

- A teacher of music and art in a middle school wrote that the course increased her confidence in her own creativeness and revealed gifts that she didn't know she had. It also gave her the courage to display her creative potential in front of students and colleagues. "I re-discovered myself as a poet and discovered my brave, leadership self who makes it possible to do my job." It gave her confidence to be a conductor and got rid of her fear of not being good enough to do her job well. The course gave her "the ability to open the creative channels at will without the need for extra stimulation from outside, and the confidence and courage to demand that others make way for as much of the creative process as I can muster in my school setting." She learned to take creative chances despite the fear of criticism from others. She is now able to lead her students "to try creative work that seems to them at first to be impossible" (Fewster).

- The head of the art department in a middle school reported that the Foundations program is conducive to a highly creative art-making process for young people and provides a meaningful method for helping them explore the vast potential of their imaginations. He wrote that it has become an integral part of his educational practice, and that "it is deeply rewarding to witness

the individuality of each student radiate through these explorations.” He had a group of grade eight students construct plaster masks and asked them to consider the masks as imaginative extensions of their personalities which they wished to explore. They responded with tremendous interest and chose qualities for their masks that ranged from being magical, to challenging gender stereotypes, to expressing deeply personal issues. He then asked them to find a quiet place and begin listening to their masks and write down what they “heard.” Some found this quite a challenge, while others wove wonderful stories. “Students who did not normally enjoy writing were suddenly completely engaged in the writing process” (A. Jahangir).

- The head of a high school visual art department said that the Foundations course gave her “an understanding of what is Other and the confidence to transfer personal experiences and understandings” to her students. She outlined the principles of the MBTI and had her students locate their type. After she explained her own type, the students discussed theirs. To explain the problem of the inferior function she had them make drawings with their non-preferred hand. The exercise had a liberating effect. She found that most students are completely bereft of any knowledge of symbolism, but become enthralled with the idea of symbolism and archetypes, and of doing inner work. If this were included in the curriculum, “how much more wellness of being and becoming there would be” (McEwen). McEwen had her students make plaster masks and line the inside with sculpture wax. The plaster then was the negative mask and the wax was the positive. The problem she posed was: “To create a sculpture using the two masks in which you present two points of view based on an issue that is very personal to you. One mask will be your outer stance, and the other mask will be what you really think way down inside.” The students were then partnered and wrote about what their partner’s sculpture said to them. The partners then shared their reactions with each other. The teacher received a copy of their writing. She reported that it was tough going, but the students loved it and that it was undoubtedly the most

successful unit that she taught (McEwen).

•Video projects are a means of getting students to collaborate in small groups. The students should select the story, invent the plot, and write the script, instead of using a known plot from a current movie. One possibility is to read the beginning of a story out loud and then ask the students to complete the story on their own by making a storyboard (a sheet of cartridge paper or newsprint folded into eight panels). Each panel has one scene of the story in words and drawings. One or more of the storyboards is selected and the class divided into teams to write the scripts and produce the skits (Clarkson, Durlak, & Pegley, 1993). Fewster describes two movie projects in her middle school. She found that it worked best to select a story that is not well known so that the students have to work out their own plots and scripts. “The learning was endless and had deep impact. I was astonished at how an unruly, undisciplined group of kids pulled together to create an experience they will remember for a long time. My principal came into the school shaking her head in amazement after finding my students (some of the more difficult ones among them) searching diligently in the school yard for small stones with which to make an avalanche. Every child was focused and on task independent of the teacher, who was inside setting up the shot with the camera crew. They learned that if you don’t write a script, no one knows what to do. They learned about themselves, their language, their culture, the media, and especially how to rely on each other, to commit to a task, and to finish it. Most of all they learned a lot about who they are as human beings, and what their place was in the class. It was a revelation to most of them. Some kids still come back and ask to see their movie.”

Among the recommendations that come out of these applications of the Foundations program are the following: (1) The concept of personality type helps students to understand themselves and their relationships to the others in the classroom, including that of the teacher; (2) Working with type gives the individual confidence in their particular creative gifts; (3) Activating the

creative imagination stimulates the production of images and felt meanings that have personal value and produces a high level of concentration and the ability to stay on task in all students; (4) Developing the knowledge of symbolism was instrumental in getting beyond clichéd images to more personal images; (5) Collaborative projects, such as videotaped “movies,” builds both authentic identity and teamwork and stimulates a high level of motivation; (6) The precognitive intelligences can be taught to any age group.

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### Abstract

The description of the curriculum of a university course designed to engage the deep structure of the creative process. First presented in 1984, the course has been given to fine arts majors and candidates for the B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees. The curriculum is summarized in twelve concepts and then described under the topics “Activating the imagination and the symbolic attitude,” “Archetypal images,” “Personality type and creativity,” “The cycle of the creative process and the ritual process.” The responses of students indicate that the course filled a deeply felt need for a course that engaged the pre-cognitive intelligences of the imagination, community, and spirituality. The essay concludes with reports from teachers who have applied concepts from the course in their own classrooms. The cohort of students from the class of 1995 stayed together to form an ongoing community that still meets regularly, gives public shows of art-work, and provides workshops on creativity to school children and adults.

Key words: intelligence of the imagination, creative process, personality type, archetypes

Figure 1. The Creative Process as a Two-Phase Cycle.





Figure 2. The Table of Personality Types. Myers Briggs Type Indicator.

2a

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ

2b

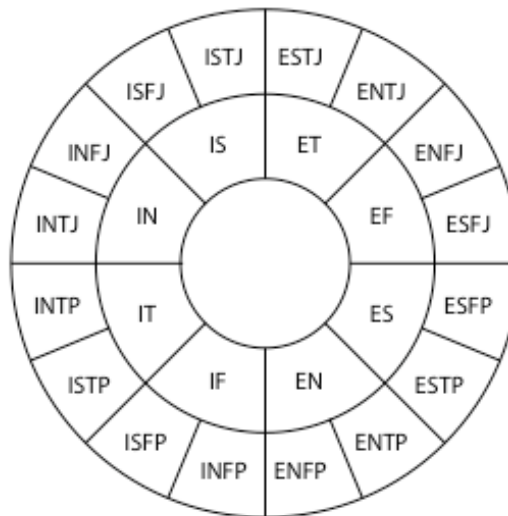


Figure 3. Eight Archetypes Coordinated with the Functions of the Personality.

Adapted from John Beebe.

