
Theses

2018

4E's Socratic Model: A grounded theory for managing team creativity in an organisational context

Philip Dennett

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses>



Part of the [Business Commons](#)

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING

The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.

Do not remove this notice.

**4E'S SOCRATIC MODEL: A GROUNDED
THEORY FOR MANAGING TEAM CREATIVITY
IN AN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

**Philip Thomas Dennett
MMgmt, Dip. Bus. Mktg**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Notre Dame Sydney

School of Business

March 2018

KEYWORDS

Creativity; Socratic Method; Socratic Dialogue; Leadership; Business management; Teams; Innovation; Critical thinking.

ABSTRACT

There has been considerable research on identifying the antecedents of creativity and the determinants of organisational creativity, but researchers are yet to develop an effective model for managing creativity within a traditional hierarchical management structure. It has been suggested that using the Socratic Method to create a learning environment within an organisation is a way to foster creativity in an uncertain environment. In this context the Socratic Method is defined as a directed questioning technique to encourage critical thinking. This thesis proposes that taking a Socratic approach to champion creativity enables management to increase creativity in their teams. It also reviews the relevant literature to test support for this assumption through the use of a grounded theory approach to propose and empirically test a model to manage a Socratic dialogue in a team environment. This thesis includes implications for theory and practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Keywords.....	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	vii
Statement of Original Authorship.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	x
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Context.....	2
1.3 Purpose.....	4
1.4 Significance and Scope.....	4
1.5 Research question.....	5
1.6 Limitations	5
1.7 Thesis Outline	5
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Context of the Literature Review	7
2.2 Creativity Defined	8
2.3 Historical Background	9
2.4 Creative Traits and Competencies.....	11
2.4.1 Intrinsic factors	12
2.4.2 Extrinsic factors	16
2.5 The Creative Organisation	18
2.6 Creativity in Teams	21
2.7 Initial synthesis of the Data	26
2.8 Socratic Approaches to Managing Creativity.....	30
2.9 Proposed Socratic Model.....	37
2.9.1 The Question	46
2.9.2 The Evidence	47
2.9.3 The Argument.....	47
2.9.4 The Results.....	47
2.10 Summary and Implications.....	48

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN.....	49
3.1 Methodology and Research Design.....	49
3.1.1 Methodology	49
3.1.2 Research Design	51
3.2 Participants.....	53
3.3 Instruments.....	54
3.3.1 Workshop template	54
3.3.2 Interview record.....	54
3.4 Data Collection	55
3.5 Procedure and Timeline.....	55
3.6 Analysis	55
3.7 Ethics and Limitations	56
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS & THEORY DEVELOPMENT	59
4.1 Organisation 1	59
4.1.1 Discussion.....	59
4.2 Theory Development – Stage 1.....	64
4.2.1 Questionnaire	65
4.2.2 Proposed workshop structure	68
4.3 Organisation 2	68
4.3.1 Creative profile.....	68
4.3.2 Discussion.....	70
4.4 Theory Development – Stage 2.....	72
4.5 Organisation 3	73
4.5.1 Creative profile.....	73
4.5.2 Discussion.....	75
4.6 Theory Development – Stage 3.....	76
4.7 Organisation 4	79
4.7.1 Creative profile.....	79
4.7.2 Discussion.....	80
4.8 Organisation 5	84
4.8.1 Creative profile.....	84
4.8.2 Discussion.....	85
4.9 Theory Development – Stage 4.....	87
4.10 Organisation 6	90

4.10.1 Creative profile.....	90
4.10.2 Discussion.....	91
4.11 Theory Development- Stage 5	93
4.12 Organisation 7	98
4.12.1 Creative profile.....	98
4.12.2 Discussion.....	99
4.13 Chapter summary	102
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	105
5.1 Theory Building Process	105
5.2 Aggregate Dimensions	106
5.2.1 Group flow.....	106
5.2.2 Leadership engagement in creative processes	110
5.2.3 Accountability.....	114
5.3 Implementing the 4E's Socratic Model.....	115
5.3.1 Supporting collateral.....	115
5.4 Theory Development.....	119
5.4.1 Model evolution	120
5.5 Validation of Final Model.....	121
5.5.1 Explore.....	121
5.5.2 Examine.....	122
5.5.3 Evaluate.....	123
5.5.4 Elect123	
5.5.5 Discussion.....	123
5.6 Chapter Summary	124
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS	125
6.1 Theory Justification.....	125
6.1.1 Evaluation.....	125
6.1.2 Practical application	127
6.1.3 Viability of the model	128
6.2 Contribution to the Literature.....	130
6.3 Limitations	133
6.4 Suggestions for Future Research	134
6.5 A Parting Word.....	135
BIBLIOGRAPHY	137

APPENDICES 155

Appendix 1 4E's Socratic Model Facilitators Guide	156
Appendix 2 Creative Leadership Techniques.....	165
Appendix 3 Book chapter: A Socratic Approach to Managing Creativity in Business(a)	202
Appendix 4 Book chapter: A Socratic Approach to Managing Creativity in Business(b)	213
Appendix 5 Questionnaire	225
Appendix 6 Proposal to participate in a Research Project: Creativity in an Organisational Context Researcher: Philip Dennett.....	231
Appendix 7 Memos written to support theory development.....	234

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 2.1: Themes in individual creativity
- Figure 2.2: Traditional vs Creative Orientation
- Figure 2.3: Themes in team creativity
- Figure 2.4: Creative ecosystem
- Figure 2.5 Conditions and norms of the creative organisation
- Figure 2.6: Creative Team Metasystem
- Figure 2.7: Roles and applications for Socratic questioning
- Figure 2.8: Approaches to creating a Socratic Dialogue
- Figure 2.9: Concepts and insights gained from the literature
- Figure 2.10: Proposed Socratic Dialogue Model
- Figure 3.1 Interview Record
- Figure 4.1. Proposed project management methodology
- Figure 4.2: Workshop 1: Interview record
- Figure 4.3: Areas of exploration
- Figure 4.4: Individual creativity index CO2
- Figure 4.5: Question rankings – CO2
- Figure 4.6: Individual creativity index CO3
- Figure 4.7: Question rankings – CO3
- Figure 4.8: Model with appended question types

Figure 4.9: Question type and purpose after Elder and Paul (1998)

Figure 4.10: Individual creativity index CO4

Figure 4.11: Question rankings – CO4

Figure 4.12: Individual creativity index CO5

Figure 4.13: Question rankings – CO5

Figure 4.14: 4E's Socratic Model with question types and cognition levels

Figure 4.15: Individual creativity index CO6

Figure 4.16: Question rankings – CO6

Figure 4.17: 4E's Socratic model facilitator's worksheet

Figure 4.18: Individual creativity index CO7

Figure 4.19: Question rankings – CO7

Figure 4.20: 4E's Socratic Model

Figure 5.1: Themes identified

Figure 5.2: Key outcomes

Figure 5.3. Implementation issues

Figure 5.4: Stages of theory development

Figure 6.1: Validation against Glaser and Strauss (1967) properties.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'P' followed by a horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

Date: 5 March 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor H el ene de Burgh-Woodman and Dr Sagar Athota, whose extensive knowledge ensured I didn't veer off the path too far. Their insightful comments made me question and revise so that the end result is far superior to my early drafts. Without their support the journey would have been much more difficult.