



# Creativity Programme Pilot

*for the Nanyang Technological University - Innovation Centre  
Singapore, November 2010*

## A Summary of the Creativity Workshop Pilot Report

### Executive Summary

In November 2010, Jeffrey Nadison (Associate-Provost for Innovation at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) invited Gary Friedman and Sharon Gelber, to present a short season of pilot workshops for the students, entrepreneur start-ups, administration staff and faculty of NTU.

Friedman is an internationally acclaimed Master Puppeteer, and Gelber is an Occupational Therapist. Together they combine their skills to facilitate optimal learning and functioning in the workplace.

The predominant purpose of the workshops was to use puppetry to challenge inhibition, and establish a 'safe' environment for opening communication and unleashing untapped innovative potential.

**The project consisted of 4 sets of workshops, each catering for the specific needs of the participant groups:**

- A two-day workshop with entrepreneur start-ups and existing entrepreneurs focused on unpacking and developing skills essential to the 'successful innovative entrepreneur'.
- A one-day workshop with administration staff associated within the Innovation Centre focused on enhancing confidence, communication and creative engagement within the workplace.
- A two-day workshop for NTU faculty (including the departments of Education, Engineering, Business, Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences).

The focus was developing personal creativity and communication skills, in order to expand teaching, research and learning styles and engagement of students within the classroom.

- A one-day workshop for the Animation students at the Art, Design & Media School focused on characterization, design and technique for the arts.

**The approach** was to use movement, guided visualization and sensory activation to de-stress the participants, and activate their senses to heighten their creative potential.

Improvisation exercises further developed their risk taking capabilities and spontaneous decision making skills as well as enhancing trust and confidence within the group.

Puppetry performance using the medium of brown paper and every-day objects provided the opportunity to explore all modes of communication, demanding teamwork of a very profound and intense nature. Story telling enhanced group empathy and opened up a level of frank open connection, which is unique and liberating in academic and business circles.

Humour was used throughout to put participants at ease and open the doors of communication for the sharing of opinions, as well as 'safe' and constructive self-analysis and group critique.

Participants were provided with the forum to uncover their own talents, see the strength of team members, work with members of their own faculty as well as other faculties to discuss and explore issues that are significant to them in their work and personal lives.

**Post-workshop Surveys** indicated that over 90% of participants provided positive feedback regarding the sessions achieving their stated objectives; believed the workshops were well designed and organized; acknowledged the facilitators having good knowledge and practical understanding of the subject matter; agreed that the facilitators were effective in communicating ideas and concepts; acknowledged that the facilitators were able to stimulate and maintain interest throughout the workshop.

89% believed the facilitators were able to use good illustrations, practical examples and other teaching aids.

79% believed the concepts and skills would be useful to their work/ career;

75% agreed that the duration of the sessions was appropriate.

**Participant feedback** highlighted their enthusiasm to have the opportunity to work in a multi-hierarchical and inter-disciplinary setting in order to safely express their opinions and explore their own and team mates' creative talents. All

participants were surprised at how quickly and easily everyone began to feel comfortable with trusting each other and working constructively and highly efficiently within the team. They all enjoyed the elements of humour, calmness, spontaneity, passion and fun that they were able to imbibe while finding innovative solutions to the requirements of the workshop activities. Participants acknowledged that if their colleagues at work had the opportunity to experience these workshops, their departments would run more efficiently and effectively. They all felt more confident to express themselves after the workshop and stated that they developed new ideas for presentation skills and meaningful ways to engage with colleagues and teach their students in the classroom. The majority of participants were interested in participating in follow up and continued creative exploratory endeavours.

**Recommendations included rolling the workshops out to include:**

- Multi-hierarchical group team-building days, enhancing creativity and open communication between levels of hierarchy within NTU faculty.
- NTU Student workshops, to enhance communication, develop creativity and provide the forum for inter-disciplinary teamwork.
- ADM Student workshops, focusing on the medium of puppetry design, construction, characterization, and performance.
- NIE student-teacher workshops, to provide examples of creative exercises to expand the students' own creativity as well as to use in the classroom.
- Professional education in-service workshops for principals and teachers, to enhance the culture of creativity and innovation.
- Creativity workshops provided directly to local primary and secondary school students.
- A journal article based on this pilot project, as well as further academic analysis would be of assistance to provide academics with substantial insight into using qualitative methodologies for exploring social issues.



## A Summary of the Creativity Workshop Pilot Programme Report

### P Prelude from the Associate-Provost, Jeff Nadison

*"I wanted to create the opportunity to let them share with you in the spirit of opening horizons, looking at problems in a new light and coming up with new solutions."*

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### Approach

*Humour and laughter are the keys to opening up people and reaching them emotionally.*

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### The Artists' Background

*After training with the late Jim Henson, he has dedicated the majority of his career to social, health and political activism using the medium of puppetry.*

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### Participants Evaluation

*96% of participants agreed that the facilitators were able to stimulate and maintain interest*



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### Final Feedback

*"I always thought I was a shy person. I never thought I could be this open and have so much fun here"*

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## Background

In November 2010, Gary Friedman and Sharon Gelber were invited by Jeffrey Nadison, Associate-Provost For Innovation at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, to present a short season of pilot workshops for the students, entrepreneur start-ups, administration staff and faculty of NTU.

### The Brief

The predominant purpose of the workshops was to use puppetry to challenge inhibition, and establish a 'safe' environment for open communication and unleashing untapped innovative potential.

This in turn would provide the possibility of fostering a joyful experience of life, performance at participants' peak ability, stimulating innovative and entrepreneurial activities as well as expanding new visions for teaching and research.



### The Objectives

The following objectives were provided to participants prior to the sessions:

- Explore new modes of communication
- Enhance your own creative output
- Express yourself confidently in front of colleagues and superiors
- Take risks, think on your feet and make decisions with confidence
- Perceive problems in a new light and come up with creative solutions
- Deal with issues in the workplace, blocking your path to success (conflict resolution, anger management, self esteem)

resolution, anger management, self esteem)

- Engage with your students, enliven your syllabus and improve presentation skills
  - Enhance innovative lateral thinking ability
  - Enhance team work and leadership skills
  - Take the initiative to speak your mind, offer opinions and receive constructive critique
  - Reduce stress and enhance brain activation for optimal learning and functioning at work
  - Shift from a model of "safe conformity" to uncover your originality, imagination and resourcefulness
- You can be the one who steps out with the innovative ideas that change your profession and industry!





## PRELUDE FROM THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST OF INNOVATION, JEFFREY NADISON

*"I am very keen and I always have been, in looking at the interfaces between very disparate disciplines. When I was a student studying chemistry, I simultaneously did a minor in graphic art. So I would start my mornings in a chemistry lab and end my afternoons making lithographs. I found that looking at the world from two very different perspectives, each governed by a different hemisphere of my brain, created a more holistic world-view and was very enriching.*

*When we had this opportunity to bring in Gary & Sharon, who view the world from completely different perspectives, mindsets, skills and tools - I wanted them to share their experiences with you in the spirit of opening horizons, looking at problems in a new light and perhaps, coming up with new solutions.*

*Some of you have never worked with each other and are probably within a stone's throw and I think it's probably unfortunate as this cheats the University and ourselves of the powerful collaborative efforts that we could be fostering. This too is another sub-text of what I hoped to achieve by spending a day rolling on the floor, working together, making puppets and expressing ideas that you might not dare to express to your bosses or their bosses directly, but maybe you would through a crumpled piece of paper.*

*I leave you all in their excellent hands and wish you a very good workshop."*

Jeffrey Nadison, Associate Provost, NTU

## Participant Groups

The project consisted of:

- A **two-day workshop** with entrepreneur start-ups and existing entrepreneurs, who are associated with the Innovation Centre at NTU
- A **one-day workshop** with the administration staff that are associated with the Innovation Centre
- A **two-day workshop** for the faculty members of NTU. Faculty from the departments of Engineering, Business School, Education, Humanities & Social Sciences and Arts were invited to attend
- A **one-day workshop** for the Animation students at the Art, Design & Media School

## Workshop Focus Areas

**The entrepreneurial group** was focussed on unpacking what it takes to be a 'successful innovative entrepreneur'; unleashing creativity and enhancing the 'soft' skills essential to being successful in their career and dealing with the complex problems of the 21st century

**The administration group** was focused on enhancing communication and creative engagement as well as developing the skills essential to being a confident participant in the workplace.

**The faculty group** focused on expanding teaching, research and learning styles in order to enhance communication and engage students with in the classroom.

The power of puppetry as a therapy tool, as well as a tool to learn, teach and explore languages, script and narrative development was discovered. Complex issues within their personal world and school environment were explored. The concept of the 'innovative leader' was unpacked.



The art students were focused on characterization, design and technique for the arts, developing an in-depth connection with the medium in which they were working.

## NTU Background

The following issues were raised during discussions with NTU management:

The challenge that the university is facing is the lack of innovation in the mindset of the Singaporean culture and the discomfort of students posing questions or speaking up for themselves, both at university and in the Singapore society in general.

Over the 80's and 90's the Nanyang Technological University was responsible for creating thousands of engineers, with little latitude for creative risk-taking. The students developed a 'safe' attitude that seemed stuck in their 'fear of failure or of embarrassment'. Senior management would like to see this fear overcome, with calculated risk taking, especially in the communications between students themselves and when dealing with faculty. This is seen to be part of a healthy learning opportunity.



The need to develop soft skills in communication is now seen to be paramount, with the country moving away from pure financial services and IT towards a society rich in nurturing knowledge content.



## *Demands of the 21st Century*

The world in the 21st century requires more than just disciplined knowledge.

Multi-disciplinary systems thinking, incorporating high problem solving skills, engaged teamwork, creative and innovative leadership and delegation, are all requirements for success in this ever changing, complex and often challenging world. By having interdisciplinary groups, made up of participants from different schools, offices and companies, the workshops are designed to foster a delight in connecting and sharing with others at this level.

## *Artists Background*



**Gary Friedman** is an internationally acclaimed Master Puppeteer. After training with the late Jim Henson, he has dedicated the majority of his career to social, health and political activism using the medium of puppetry. He has developed hugely successful international adult- education projects based on HIV-AIDS, Democracy, Corruption, Abuse and Prisons. He is an international Puppetry-in-Education consultant, workshop facilitator and lecturer. At present he teaches puppetry for TV and the Web and is the creative director of 'Corporate Creatures', working with puppetry as a

communication tool within the corporate world.

**Sharon Gelber** is an Occupational Therapist, workshop facilitator and Learning-Movement consultant. She has a private therapy practice in Sydney, Australia where she combines OT with some of the latest break-through alternative healing modalities. Her workshops motivate and empower participants with profound tools to relieve stress, enhance creativity and performance; activating the brain and senses for optimal creative and physical/mental functioning in the work and home space.

## *Approach*

### *Using puppetry to break down boundaries*

The arts have always stimulated creativity and lateral thinking ability. Puppetry specifically has been used for thousands of years to explore ideas and communicate messages in an effective and entertaining way. Most importantly, a voice is given to issues that are often sensitive or overlooked. Being one step removed from the human world, the puppet provides a safe space for conflict resolution.

A great deal of puppetry does not require expression through language. This non-verbal communication is especially useful to develop, seeing as modern communication, with its emphasis on technology, is lacking the subtle use of non-verbal skills. The result often compromises effective communication both in personal and business endeavors. Just as performers are aware of the subtle cues given by the audience and co-performers when on

stage, the lecturer or presenter requires the same skills 'to read the audience' (whether that be colleagues or fellow delegates), and mould their presentation to meet their needs. Furthermore, a non-verbal emphasis works especially well in multi-cultural institutions or where participants feel nervous or are not used to expressing themselves. It provides a bridge for participants to feel comfortable in themselves and with others before moving on to articulate ideas that they previously may not have had the courage to express.

Humour and laughter are the keys to opening up people and reaching them emotionally. This is especially beneficial in societies in which people are very stressed and often not provided with the opportunity to engage meaningfully on an emotional level or simply not given the encouragement to find joy in their daily experiences. The puppet imbibes humour and allows spontaneity. In this way participants feel safe to let down their guard, have fun, and express themselves without fearing ridicule or shame. When having fun, participants are motivated, learn easily and never forget the experience. It reduces stress, activates the brain and takes intimidation (or fear) out of the equation. Their creative and innovative potential is heightened exponentially.

Adding to this, being a kinesthetic art, participants are actively involved in the entire process. Engagement is maximal, and once more, learning is enhanced in speed, depth and effectiveness.

Being focused in the moment, slowing down and breathing, are skills intrinsic to puppetry and essential to health,



finding joy in life and connecting with self and others. This is sorely lacking in our frenetic lives.

### *The power of story telling*

By sharing stories, the participants get to know each other on a different level, developing empathy, trust, compassion and acceptance within the group. Listening skills are enhanced. New views and perspectives are provided to old issues. Feelings can be expressed and anxiety provoking situations dealt with, in a fun safe way in which participants come to realize that they are not alone in their feelings.

### *Group Improvisation*

Quick decision making and problem solving skills, spontaneity, trusting intuition, risk taking, 'out of the box' lateral thinking, confidence, being in the moment and resourcefulness are all enhanced.

Because 'voice' is typically an area of inhibition in daily and work life, many exercises focus on encouraging voice activation and experimentation.

The concepts of sharing responsibility, co-creativity, co-ownership and value added suggestions are essential elements of the work.

Unexplored strengths and talents of self and team members are discovered.

Following an understanding of the nature of Singaporean culture and the business and academic world in general, in which people feel relatively intimidated about speaking their minds frankly and providing feedback to each other; the workshop is designed to provide a safe environment during all exercises for participant feedback. In fact, it is an essential and integral part of the learning process, where participants constructively direct, critique and offer suggestions to their fellow performers.

### *Movement and sensory activation: The key to unlocking the brain*

By incorporating very specific **Brain Gym®** movement exercises and whole- brain learning tools, participants learn sustainable techniques which they can use in class, at home and work, to de-stress the

brain-body system and assist in learning and optimal functioning. They also develop a very visceral understanding of the power of all their senses to enhance communication, and an awareness of the effects of stress on their system, with the resultant shutting down of these essential elements of communication.

## Workshop Structure

Explanation of the exercises with participant feedback follow below.

### *Introductory circle*

Participants and facilitators introduced themselves, their passion and brainstormed the concept of 'Creativity'.

Some of the responses included: *"Stepping out of the box; not trusting everything we are told; seeing things from a different perspective; doing something spontaneous; being playful and naughty; creating problems and then finding the solutions; merging two different ideas from two different disciplines or perspectives to create something new; breaking through our own boundaries and comfort zones and trying new things without limits; thinking of things that are not that obvious or logical."*

**Detailed Feedback can be found in Appendix 3**

### *'Connection to self' warm up session*

Exercises included breath work, **Brain Gym®** movements, guided visualization and a 'paper meditation' (where participants were provided the opportunity to explore a piece of brown paper, using all their senses, in the darkened space). The session concluded with a feedback of their experience and sharing their own methods of stress release, relaxation and brain activation.

Feedback included: *"It was wonderful to explore space and have the freedom to move without limitations. We don't have that opportunity much. In most urbanized Asian cities, there is a restriction on personal space. You tend to be very cautious of how*

*you move, bumping into people in the train station, etc with parcels. You tend to be very aware, closed in and shut down."*

### *'Connecting to each other' improvisation exercises*

Exercises focussed on developing momentum, focus and eye contact, exploring space, movement, bodies and emotions.

Some of the responses included: *"This concept of spending the energy and time exploring the talents and strengths of team members is directly transferable to our work situation and can greatly benefit our teamwork and success. I used to think a lot about how people thought about me. But now it is much easier. It helped put me at ease in front of people. I am able to express myself more freely. It is delightful seeing people quickly dropping their defenses and becoming comfortable. I enjoyed showing true emotion. It is seldom possible in our society."*

**Detailed feedback can be found in Appendix 4**

### *Animation of paper*

Gary demonstrated how to create characters and bring them to life using movement and sound. The participants were given the opportunity to experiment with characterization of their own paper characters.

Participants were then divided into teams to create a paper puppet character symbolic of:

- A successful, innovative entrepreneur (entrepreneur & 'start up' workshop)
- Successful team member (admin staff workshop)
- Optimal creative/ innovative leader (NTU faculty workshop)

Including those elements and accessories (technical, cultural and societal), which support the character as well as lead to its destruction or downfall. Participants had to include a reflection of the values and talents that they saw in themselves.

**An example of this exercise can be found in Appendix 5**



### *Group Improvisation pieces, using brown paper puppet characters to develop and perform a scenario*

The groups were given ten-minutes to workshop their scenarios using paper for the characters, props and landscape. Each group performed their piece to the audience, after which audience members and facilitators provided feedback to the performers. The topics were discussed further, regarding how similar scenarios are handled in the workplace.

### *An exercise in 'confidence'*

Participants were given two minutes to develop a paper character that embodied a 'lack of confidence' and were asked to transform it to a 'confident' character.

Each team was then given a sheet of paper with a line reading from zero to ten. They were asked to make points reflecting areas in their lives where they felt least confident (zero) and most confident (ten). Group discussions were held, discussing the traps of low confidence: Passivity, indifference and aggression, *versus* assertive communication. Solutions were also discussed for improving confidence in those areas of life, which were lacking confidence.

### *Bunraku-style puppetry*

This was ultimate exercise in teamwork and working in co-ordinated harmony. All the team members worked together to operate a single puppet character. This concept is similar to Japanese 'Bunraku' puppet theatre, in which each team member manipulates a different body-part of the puppet.



### *Group story telling exercise*

Participants develop story lines within the group, each person adding onto the next step in the story. The second exercise develops the story with mime, expanding on the first gesture and transforming the story from person to person in the group.

Feedback included: *"This workshop activity helps to develop 'non-judgement'. Often at work we have fixed ideas which we find very difficult to let go. Here we are learning to play with the ideas and be creative. Part of creativity is wanting the idea to become richer. At work I would like to explore the possibility of allowing the team to play more with ideas which will allow them to become richer."*

**Detailed participant feedback can be found in Appendix 6**

### *Object Manipulation & Animation*

Participants worked in groups, bringing every day objects (found in the home, work or from nature) to life through developing characters and a storyline. Participants developed, for each object, its movement, character, voice and sound potential. Scenarios were first fantasy – based.

Participants brainstormed the applications of this exercise for business: *"When you bring human characteristics into a product, you can get people to relate to the product on a human level. This has great implications and has applications for advertising, marketing and promotions. The key to a good presentation is remembering that the audience is also human, with emotions, feelings, language, just like we are here. The only difference is that they will be wearing suits. You want the audience to empathize with you and*



*understand you. If it's used correctly, humour can relax people and open them up, to allow a two-way communication which is both flexible and joyful for all involved."*

### *Playback Theatre using objects*

The final exercise was using the medium of object theatre, together with personal life stories. After telling the story, the storyteller becomes the observer, as the performers recreate the story with objects. The objects transform into the characters, props and landscape of the story.

One of the aims of the puppeteers is to assist the storyteller in finding some resolution in the story. After watching the performance, the storyteller has the chance to make any changes, including changing the ending or resolution. This exercise is a mixture of Psychodrama and Playback Theatre.

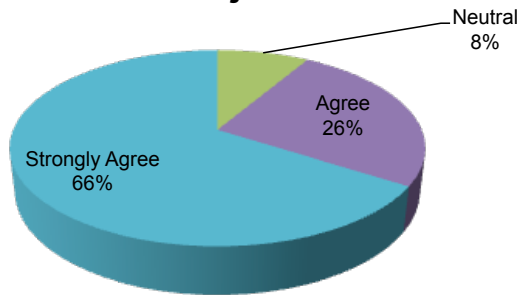
The stories chosen, included elements of childhood memories, family relationship-dramas as well as themes of *"failure, truth, honesty, integrity, self-esteem and self-worth."*

Because of the personal nature of the stories, we have not included the details of this work in the report. The general feedback was overwhelming support and empathy for the storytellers. The participants worked together in problem solving to bring about resolution to the stories. The performers experienced a profound respect for the art of puppetry as a therapeutic tool to deal with sensitive issues that would not normally be brought out into the open for discussion.

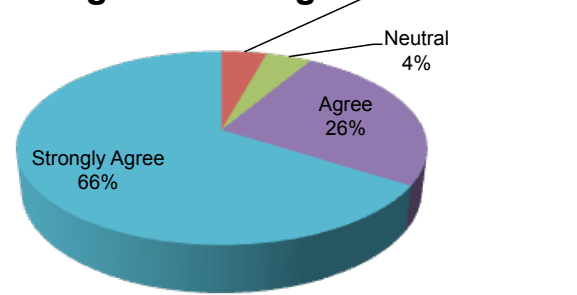
# Workshop Evaluation from participant surveys

Information gathered from 47 participant responses at NTU in Singapore

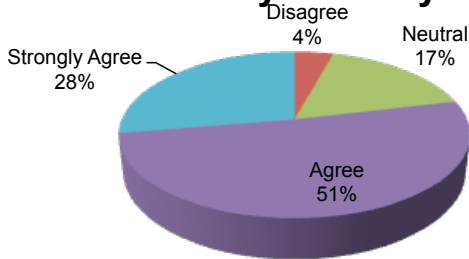
## Q1) The session achieved its stated objectives



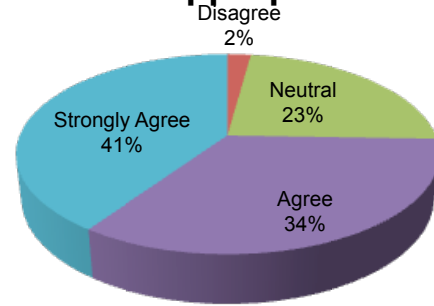
## Q2) The workshop was well designed and organized



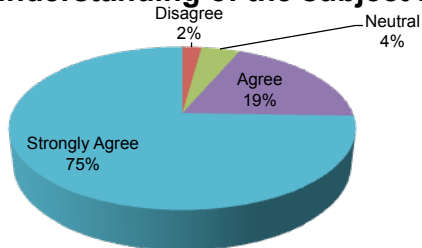
## Q3) The concepts and skills presented will be useful and relevant to my work/my career



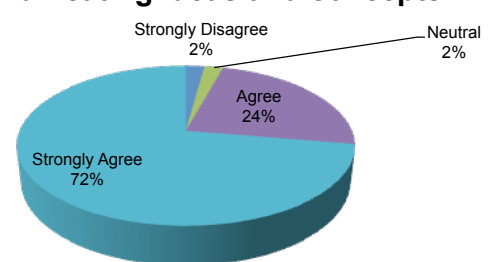
## Q4) The duration of the session was appropriate



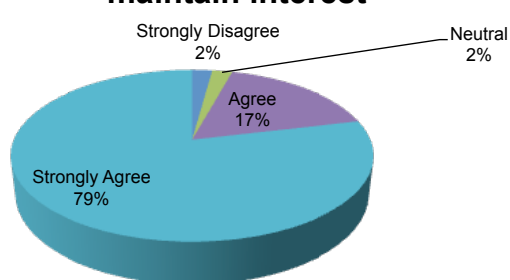
## Q5) The facilitators had good knowledge and practical understanding of the subject matter



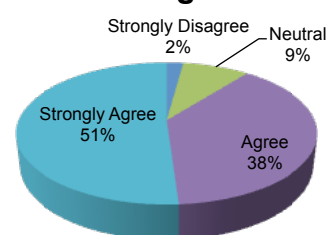
## Q6) The facilitators were effective in communicating ideas and concepts



## Q7) The facilitators were able to stimulate and maintain interest



## Q8) The facilitators were able to use good illustrations, practical examples and other teaching aids





## Final feedback

### Final feedback from participants

Please find details of final participant feedback from each group in Appendices 7-11

Some of the feedback has been highlighted below:

- *I always thought I was a shy person. I never thought I could be this open and have so much fun here.*
- *Spontaneity is what I liked best. And that comes from non-judgement. It is really fun to just be there and know that nothing can be really wrong at all.*
- *I think that making fun of yourself helps you drop packages that you are carrying around with you. It is good for work and for life in general. It is helpful doing it in the group because you see everyone doing the same thing; it helps you behave in similar ways. Once you do it here, it will be easier to do it once you get out of this door and into life - you will be able to do the same thing.*
- *I realised the power of taking time to elaborate and not rushing through things.*
- *I am developing an understanding that life is not only about business, it's about what you want to contribute to the world. We can actually benefit the society. It's all about passion.*
- *I would like to take home the calmness inside myself.*
- *I feel alive again.*
- *This is the first time in my life that I see a group of highly intelligent individuals, with high qualifications, coming together and yet you can let your hair down and be so un-academic and become almost child-like and you let yourself go. I think it is very good for the soul.*
- *This is the first real opportunity we've had to interact with our colleagues as individuals, as people. I think it'll be very hard to miscommunicate in the future, now that I've got to know everybody and you've all got to know me.*
- *Today we got to see each other's silliness (the part we never like to expose to our colleagues) with lots of joy, openness and frank interactions with everyone.*
- *We learnt today how critical communication is in our workplace. We really need to communicate face-to-face with our colleagues.*

• *Once in a while we need to break totally out, to do something different from what we normally do. Especially with our colleagues. Not only a social gathering, but something more: As I could see today, it makes me realise that you can detach yourself from every day work with a bunch of colleagues to do something that involves your creativity. That is something I want to do more of, after today.*

• *For myself, instead of requiring ourselves as well as our students simply to produce papers, and achieve the so called 'criteria', we should also be challenging ourselves to think about the meaning of life, which is very important, long term, - we should learn how to enjoy ourselves, how we can make ourselves happy and this workshop teaches me a lot about this.*

• *Once in a while if highly stressed people are involved in some kind of workshop like this, I think the University will become more productive.*

• *The power of teamwork is very strong. I think if my whole department could do this, it would improve the performance of the whole school, through teamwork.*

• *I think this workshop offers a unique opportunity for people from completely different departments, with completely different cultures, to mingle and share and discuss issues that really matter. This applies to the people at the top of the hierarchy like Jeff, to people like me. We can discuss openly about the issues that matter to us, as one organisation. And it is really great that we have had this opportunity, because it would not have happened in every day life without this medium of facilitation.*

• *I was overwhelmed by the ingenuity and spontaneity of people – how we can come up with beautiful things in the spur of the moment. We can inject this into our company. We need to foster more feedback from everyone in the team, as they often don't get a chance to really express themselves.*

• *Much communication is non-logical, based on emotion. Many people only focus on the logical part of it. It's important to connect with your client first. First emotionally, then the rest will follow with success*

• *I had a taste of 'How to train my ego'. When you start with an idea and someone changes it, you feel your ego is dented. When*

*working in a group, the combination of many ideas leads to a greater sum.*

• *There are many teaching ideas that I can take home and use in my classes.*

• *I am learning how you can make a presentation more interesting to an audience and touch people emotionally.*

• *For me, it was nice to see that 'Laughter' should really be part of the education process.*

• *There are so many dimensions to communication. Sometimes the most important message is not done through the spoken word. It is through action, belief and energy. I was very impressed over the last two days - we have worked with this as a very powerful tool for healing and helping.*

• *I shall focus more on how I conduct myself, not based so much on word, but more on actions and being true to myself.*

### Final feedback from Sharon Gelber

*"I was not aware until we had started the workshops, how little opportunity staff and colleagues had for frank discussion and sharing of ideas and emotions in their workplace. Our workshops provided this forum for the first time, for colleagues who may work in close proximity, even within the same office, to work as a team together. They reveled in this opportunity. Our initial objectives were met and exceeded exponentially.*

*We were also expecting that it would be very challenging for the faculty group to relax, open up and be free to interact with each other. These concerns were unfounded and they proved to be the most eager and willing group to break down barriers and explore uncharted territory.*

*It was beneficial that we had no prior knowledge or pre-conception of any of the participants' rank or position within the university hierarchy (with the exception of the Associate Provost for Innovation, Jeffrey Nadison). In that way, a precedent was set of leveling the hierarchy and every one connected on an equal footing. This was a valuable opportunity. The fact that Jeffrey Nadison attended the workshops, either to introduce us, or as an active participant provided an authenticity to the University's desire to bring about substantial change within its structure and staff."*



### Final feedback from Gary Friedman

*"As we facilitated the workshops, it became clear that the most important message was to challenge our participants to create an environment at work, which made it safe for their students and teams to explore emotions, opinions, play with ideas and take risks. In that way, a culture would develop in which every one would 'feel heard' and acknowledged and would subsequently respond with energy, passion and a motivation to perform at their best."*

### Final feedback from Jeffrey Nadison, following the faculty workshop

*"The problem in fostering innovation in Singapore is modulating mindsets: so that people will want to take risks, challenge the status quo, but in a respectful way, so things can move forward. But I found that many of the students coming to NTU were already moulded in the 'old way'. It sometimes seems almost too late. The clay is almost dry. We need to work back with the youth, making sure that the next generations of Singaporeans have the opportunity to thrive in a knowledge-intensive society.*

*That's why we need to get to teachers and teachers of teachers, like the participants from NIE. We need to access the children by working with both their parents and teachers.*

*So regarding this workshop, I would love you to be able to use what you have experienced here, to pass it on to the teachers who will be teaching the students in schools. We need to develop a sustainable system, so that in a generation or half a generation, we can achieve the objective that the government is seeking today - a thriving knowledge society.*

*For those who have children at home and who work with children: All the work you have been exposed to, don't let it die, the tools, the skills you have developed here, take them back. They will help us to re-discover the child within, which when found again, can be the spark for renewed creativity. That is what you were able to unleash during this workshop. It was always within you. Gary and Sharon helped peel back the layers of the onion to expose that child. So don't forget how to do that. Take the tools you have learnt and bring them into your daily lives."*

## Recommendations

### Participants' recommendations

- "In the work environment, it's very hard to get people to disconnect with the real world, unlike here, where we are isolated and held together in a safe space, forgetting about the problems outside and not caring about the consequences. The solution is to bring our people together in a different environment, now and again, to recharge their batteries and be creative. That's what we all really need. I would recommend this work for a group team-building day, where the company takes the day to play together.

- I think this would be great for team dynamics and moral; assisting with communication in a short period of time; developing creativity; accessing everyone's opinions; and understanding the players in our team."

- "Maybe we need to get the deans sitting in on sessions like this, for them to see the potential. Then we could slowly but surely grow the group, bringing in more people and building a culture of change and openness."

- "It is good that we had a choice to come. Our school didn't volunteer us, so we knew the commitment. We wanted to explore it. It would not work if administration had to choose members of faculty to attend. Each time you run the workshop, just send it out to everyone and see who is interested, see who is ready at that point in time to attend."

- "When we go back to school, we can be representatives of this work, and we can chat to any one else who may be interested in coming onboard and opening their eyes to how they can personally change, open up, and start a network of people with similar visions and a common goal."

- "It would be fabulous to run these workshops at primary and secondary schools as part of the established set of workshops that are free for students in Singaporean schools. Children can volunteer or teachers can select them, according to their different streams and levels. The opportunity for children to

be exposed to this work is dependent on whether the school system/leadership is open to sustain this culture and can fund these workshops. It is therefore essential to advocate this work at the levels of school management as well as at the Ministry of Education."

### Artists' recommendations

The following recommendations include follow up workshops, facilitated by Gary Friedman and Sharon Gelber, based on the format of the November 2010 pilot workshops:

- Multi-hierarchical group team-building days, enhancing creativity and open communication between levels of hierarchy within NTU faculty. This would be a voluntary exercise in which members of faculty from Engineering, Business School, Education, Humanities & Social Sciences and the Arts are invited to experience the two-day workshop.

- Single or two-day workshops offered to students across faculties, to enhance communication, develop creativity and provide the forum for inter-disciplinary teamwork.

- Half-day, single or multiple day workshops designed specifically for ADM students, focussing on the medium of puppetry design, construction, characterization, and performance.

- Multiple-day NIE student-teacher workshops, to provide examples of creative exercises to expand the students' own creativity as well as to use in the classroom.

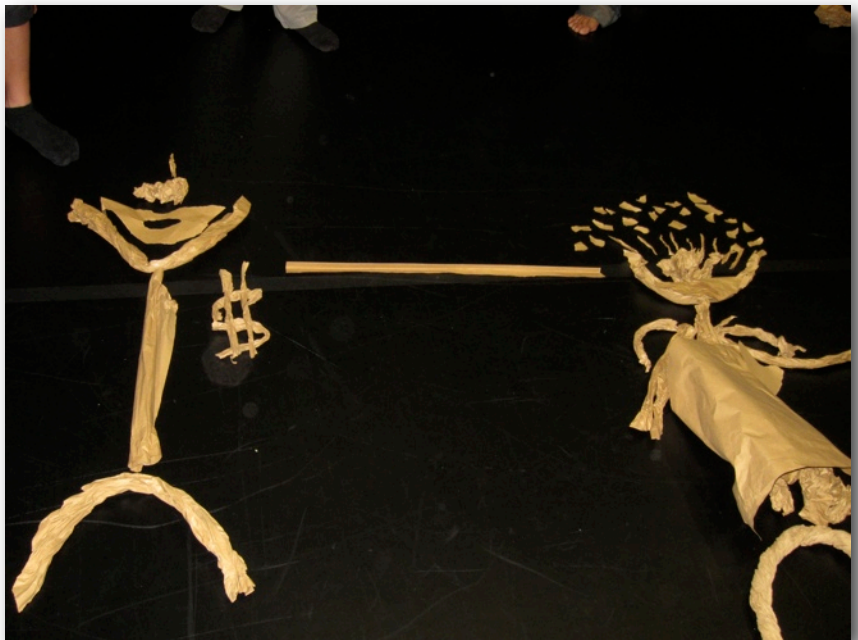
- Friedman and Gelber wish to link up with the Ministry of Education, in order to provide professional education in-service workshops for principals and teachers, to enhance the culture of creativity and innovation. The artists would also like to feed into the existing pool of creativity workshops provided directly to local primary and secondary school students.

- A journal article based upon this pilot programme, as well as further academic analysis would be of assistance to provide academics with substantial insight into using qualitative methodologies for exploring social issues.

## Implementations

Following requests made from the groups, certain recommendations have been implemented:

- A Facebook site with photos and videos has been set up, documenting the experience of the pilot workshops. [http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group\\_125565544175018](http://www.facebook.com/home.php?sk=group_125565544175018)
- The full raw footage of the workshops is available for participants to view and recap the exercises, and watch themselves perform from the audience perspective. This report document is also available for all participants.
- A follow up session with all initial participants will take place with Gary and Sharon in March 2011 when they return to Singapore. They will expand on the workshop material and evaluate the extent that the initial workshop has been incorporated into the participants' daily and work lives.
- NIE is in the process of organising workshops for their student teachers, facilitated by Gary and Sharon in May 2011.
- The Innovation Centre is currently being renovated and one of the buildings is being converted into a performance space. Once the venue is set up, creative events will be held on a regular monthly basis and participants of these workshops will be invited to assist facilitate and attend the functions. The participants have also been put on the emailing list for other events organised by the Innovation Centre.



**For a copy of the full report, including the appendices and for booking enquiries, please contact us on: [info@puppetrynews.com](mailto:info@puppetrynews.com)**

### OUR LATEST YOU TUBE WORKSHOP FILMS:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inLdDV7N6KI>

Creativity Workshop for Entrepreneurs at NTU

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ai5wedDLnA>

Creativity Workshop for Faculty of NTU

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGEdGNRa7rg>

Creativity Workshop for Administration at NTU

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTYF9u\\_1Fh4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTYF9u_1Fh4)

Creativity Workshop for Animation Students at NTU

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Walp3Lo7XWA>



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