

## AUGUST 2011 SEMINAR SUMMARY

### THE POWER OF PEOPLE: ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE ARTS

Monday 29 August 2011, 3.30-7.00pm

Australia Council, 372 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills

#### PRESENTER: ELIZA MULDOON

Eliza Muldoon is an awarded lecturer at the School of Art History and Art Education within the College of Fine Arts. Eliza's fascination with processes and people led her to a Bachelor of Science, Psychology (Honours) degree. She now indulges this fascination at the School of Art History and Art Education within the College of Fine Arts and also recently at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. In addition, Eliza is the founder and director of [artsinterview.com](http://artsinterview.com), a new web resource dedicated to the discussion of Australian arts workers' organisational practices and experiences. Eliza's various professional ventures explore the interaction of art and psychology and their combined potential to influence the development of individual, community and arts industry wellbeing.

#### SEMINAR

Eliza Muldoon presented an informative 3 hour session on organisational psychology with references to major theorists in this field. The session covered Motivation, Learning, Groups and Teams, and Stress.

Attendees identified issues that arts organisations commonly face as lack of money, lack of staff, lack of time, lack of infrastructure and surfeit of ego. A major challenge for arts organisations, therefore, is figuring out how to protect the passion of their staff.

#### MOTIVATION

The evening commenced with a review of performance and wellbeing, and the role of motivation as an influence on performance.

Eliza presented the formula:  $\text{Performance} = \text{Ability} \times \text{Motivation}$ . That is, a person's performance in the workplace is determined by the skills and ability that they bring to their position, and their motivation to use that ability. As such, it is important for managers to understand their staff's abilities and strengths and also understand how each individual is motivated.

For example, motivation at work can be influenced by factors such as financial compensation, recognition, rewards, status, applause, positive reviews, prestige and affiliation.

This relates to McClelland's Theory of Needs, which proposes that people are motivated by the need for Affiliation, Power, or Achievement. People with a need for Affiliation often need a sense of acceptance from their peers, or to be part of a community; those who relate to Power as a driver usually aspire to leadership roles; and people who need to Achieve, gain their reward from recognition for their successes.

Eliza demonstrated how this concept of Motivation and Ability could be used when dealing with poor performance in the workplace by introducing Whetten and Cameron's Performance Diagnosis Model (2010). This model suggests that to address a poor performance issue, managers should first identify whether the problem relates to the individual's lack of ability or lack of motivation. Motivation can be increased by offering suitable rewards such as: flexible hours, notes of thanks, introductions and invitations, public acknowledgement, improved workspace and the like.

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If the performance problem is due to lack of ability, the manager may need to consider whether they can provide better training, resources or mentorship, or indeed, whether the individual has the aptitude for their position.

Understanding whether staff members are motivated by intrinsic, extrinsic rewards or a combination of both is another way of fostering effective workplace arrangements. Intrinsic rewards come from one's own sense of satisfaction; extrinsic rewards are administered by others.

When we are intrinsically motivated we are more likely to thrive on:

- sense of meaningfulness
- sense of choice
- sense of competence
- sense of progress

When we are extrinsically motivated, we require some form of external inducement such as:

- bonuses
- public recognition

The audience was then challenged to question their motivation and to consider whether others in their workplace are motivated and to look at the reasons for both.

### LEARNING

For this topic, Eliza drew on the theories of Honey and Mumford, who have developed a model that distinguishes between the following types of people and how they learn:

- activist: learns by doing, brainstorming, problem solving and role play
- pragmatist: wants to know how information will be relevant, refers to case studies and utilises problem solving
- theorist: wants to know why, researches theories behind concepts and uses models, charts, diagrams, stories, quotes
- reflector: likes to observe all the different ideas before synthesising them

(An informative explanation of these styles can be found on the following website. [www.peterhoney.com](http://www.peterhoney.com))

Learning Organisations were looked at in reference to Peter Senge, from whose work Eliza identified the following key points:

- real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human
- through learning we re-create ourselves (and our organisations)
- through learning we become able to do something we were never able to do

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- through learning we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it
- through learning we extend our capacity to create
- there is within each of us a deep hunger for this type of learning

(Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation.*)

Eliza spoke about the benefits to the individual of participating in learning and also the benefits for the organisation that facilitates and responds well to learning. Keeping up to date with policy changes, new research and literature on the arts requires ongoing commitment to learning, from individuals as well as organisations, but the result is an empowered and knowledgeable team.

Learning in the workplace can occur through being thrown in at the deep end, watching others or training. It is estimated that an employee utilises only 20% of their ability, therefore it is advantageous for organisations to use strategies that enhance that performance. These could include projects to encourage personal development, tuition schemes, horizontal learning and the encouragement of ideas. Another strategy could be to allow staff to take time out each week to read about industry news.

### GROUPS and TEAMS

This section of the seminar focused on understanding and getting the best out of one's team.

Eliza began by introducing the concept of organisational norms, the defining features and behaviors of a group. She introduced David Feldman's explanation of positive and negative norms, and how these norms can make or break an organisation.

To identify the norms of your workplace culture, consider how you would describe the Stories, Rituals, Routines, Processes and Power in your organisation.

- Stories: how do individuals talk about their work place?
- Rituals: how do you celebrate good things in the workplace?
- Routines: How do individuals approach their work and do they have the freedom to break 'routine' behaviours?
- Processes: are team members encouraged to speak about processes that don't work? Can people voice ideas and will their ideas be heard?
- Power: who holds the power in the organisation? This may not actually be the manager, but an individual who holds influence with other staff.

(Sadri and Lees (2001). *Developing corporate culture as a competitive advantage*)

Eliza suggested the following 10 tips for building a great team:

1. Consider the culture
2. Communicate high standards

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3. Model expected behaviours
4. Create a sense of urgency
5. Make sure the skills and ability mix is right
6. Have clear behaviour rules
7. Celebrate early success
8. Spend a good amount of time together
9. Give positive feedback
10. Reward high performance

The audience was asked to consider the following questions:

- Why are people part of your organisation?
- Does the group offer them what they need?
- Do you get what you need from your groups?
- Are there positive or negative norms in your work culture?
- Do you do what it takes to create a good team/ group?

Understanding the individuals within your team, what their needs are and how they work together leads not just to a more productive team, but reduces the emotional labour required to manage a workplace.

### **STRESS**

The final topic for the evening was Dealing with Organisational Stress.

Eliza cited an interview with Helen Garner. When asked "What do you think are the most stressful aspects of working in the arts?" Garner replied: "Just doing the work. The technical and moral battle of doing it. Fighting lethargy and postponement. Tolerating the responses of other people to what I've done." ([artsinterview.com](http://artsinterview.com)) Stress can be categorised as either constructive stress or destructive stress. Constructive stress is what propels us forward, destructive stress can deplete us. For the individual to manage stress, Eliza suggests the following strategies:

- time management
- physical exercise
- relaxation training
- social support

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- lifestyle changes
- stress management training

Organisational stress can be addressed by attention to:

- selection and placement
- job redesign
- goal setting
- participative decisions
- organisational communication
- wellbeing programs

Potential sources of stress can include environmental, individual and organisational factors. These can manifest as physiological symptoms, psychological symptoms and also behavioural symptoms such as absenteeism and staff turnover.

[www.well-connected.com](http://www.well-connected.com) is one of the resources Eliza recommends on this subject. One way she attends to her own stress management is by having a family craft day on Sundays and for this she recommends Art and the Brain Semir Zeki). In the workplace, judicious placement of indoor plants can also create a more harmonious environment.

### TO CONCLUDE

Leaders of our arts organisations, be they formal or informal leaders, can model change where change is needed. The wealth of information so generously provided by Eliza equipped the audience with the questions, theories and resources needed to enhance their respective workplaces.

### ADDITIONAL REFERENCES AND WEBSITES (Eliza Muldoon)

Eliza Muldoon recommends the following references, websites and online videos:

#### Tips

- Look at the reference lists in the links provided
- Look at more works by the authors (they often have their own website)
- Do a search of key words in scholar.google.com

#### From the introduction

The site that I mentioned a few times, the arts practitioner quotes were from our web project [artsinterview.com](http://artsinterview.com)

The little exercise where I asked everyone to pull your notes closer.

Friedman and Forster (2002) The Influence of Approach and Avoidance Motor Actions on Creative Cognition. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology.

Some of the sources I mentioned throughout can be located at the following links:



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Australia Council Research

[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research\\_hub](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research_hub)

SAMAG

<http://www.samag.org/>

NAVA National Association for the Visual Arts Ltd

<http://www.visualarts.net.au/>

Museums and Galleries NSW

<http://mgnsw.org.au/>

Barry's Blog

<http://blog.westaf.org/>

Arts Hub

<http://www.artshub.com.au/au/>

KAPE communications

<http://www.kape.com.au/>

COMEDIA

<http://www.comedia.org.uk/>

DEMOS

<http://www.demos.co.uk/publications>

The Kennedy Center

<http://www.kennedy-center.org/>

The Wallace Foundation

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/Pages/default.aspx>

Harvard Business Review

<http://hbr.org/>

### MOTIVATION

This is the statistic I mentioned in the introduction to motivation:

"In a typical workplace, only 29 percent of employees are actively motivated and engaged in their jobs, while 71 percent are unmotivated and disengaged - either not engaged at all (54 percent) or are actively disengaged (17 percent) - according to the Gallup Management Journal's Employee Engagement Index."

<http://gmj.gallup.com/home.aspx>

### PERFORMANCE

performance= ability x motivation

By Heider (1958) and empirically confirmed by Anderson and Butzin (1974) as well as by Kun, Parsons, and Ruble (1974)

Whetton and Cameron's Performance Diagnosis Model (2010)

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/product?ISBN=9780136121008>

Intrinsic Motivation at Work: What Really Drives Employee Engagement

Kenneth Wayne Thomas

[http://books.google.com/books/about/Intrinsic\\_Motivation\\_at\\_Work.html?id=npDx7Bp0ZtwC](http://books.google.com/books/about/Intrinsic_Motivation_at_Work.html?id=npDx7Bp0ZtwC)

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Job Satisfaction: An Integrative Literature Review

Christina M. Stello

<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/olpd/research/StudentConf/papers/StelloHerzberg.pdf>

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### LEARNING

I mentioned (and showed a picture) of this study- the video is VERY interesting!

Albert Bandura Social Modelling youtube Bobo the Clown

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

Honey and Mumford's Learning Style

[www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk](http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk)

[www.peterhoney.com](http://www.peterhoney.com)

This is a nice summary chart:

[http://www.wipp.nhs.uk/tools\\_gpn/toolu4\\_identifying\\_learning.php](http://www.wipp.nhs.uk/tools_gpn/toolu4_identifying_learning.php)

I should note, that you can do formal tests, but I think these ones are quite easily to evaluate through observation and questions

Peter Senge and the Learning Organisation

This offers more detail than we discussed

There is a LOT of depth in this model, I think you can decide the level of academic engagement. The core ideas are quite easy to follow and apply though

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/senge.htm>

Here is the book on google books

[http://books.google.com/books/about/The\\_fifth\\_discipline.html?id=b0XHUvs\\_iBkC](http://books.google.com/books/about/The_fifth_discipline.html?id=b0XHUvs_iBkC)

There is a lot more reading available, just do a quick google search

### GROUPS and TEAMS

Here are two links to good summaries of organisational culture

<http://rds.epi->

[ucsf.org/ticr/syllabus/courses/68/2010/04/15/Lecture/readings/Ouchi%20et%20al%201985%20Organization%20Culture.pdf](http://ucsf.org/ticr/syllabus/courses/68/2010/04/15/Lecture/readings/Ouchi%20et%20al%201985%20Organization%20Culture.pdf)

<http://www.sergaygroup.com/Smart-Talk/What-is-Corporate-Culture.html>

### NORMS

Here are a few short discussions about the influence, types and development of norms:

<http://www.learningcommons.org/t2t/day1/norms.php>

This is a summary that introduces lots of group theories. Perhaps take a look and see if anything else appeals to you.

[http://www.infed.org/groupwork/what\\_is\\_a\\_group.htm](http://www.infed.org/groupwork/what_is_a_group.htm)

Here is another:

<http://getinvolved.uky.edu/Leadership/pdf/Group%20Dynamics.pdf>

While on group work, some of psychology's most renowned and controversial research is about how people interact. I have put some youtubes here for you. They are fascinating (and I find that a couple are truly shocking). They are a little off track, but the key principles in them can all be applied to workplace behaviour, even behaviour in the arts generally for some issues.

Here are three other classics that we can experience thanks to youtube. They also offer further insight into why studying group processes is really useful. People groups make human do very odd things!

The Milgram experiment

This one is not the original, it is a reenactment by Derren Brown - same principles and procedures though

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drQduJptOGw&feature=related>

Here is another reenactment

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcvSNg0HZwk>

Asch's conformity in groups study

This is a reenactment with a voice-over explaining it

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYlh4MkcfJA>

(also about conformity- funny) An old candid camera

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRFx7YU6eXE&feature=related>

The Bystander effect

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSsPfbup0ac&feature=related>

Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment

Two movies have been based on this experiment

Das Experiment and the experiment (recent)

<http://www.prisonexp.org/>

N.B. When Stephen Soderbergh was in Australia for Tot Mom he locked in the play quite quickly and set about making a film, based on a similar premise, what would happen if you let a bunch of actors loose in the STC. He filmed it.

### VIRTUAL TEAMS

<http://virtualteamsblog.com/>

### STRESS

This is a fantastic summary- the best I've seen.

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/work-related\\_stress](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/work-related_stress)

This elaborates on the self-talk point that I made. In the previous seminar about work-life balance a point was made about our harsh self-critic (it was a brilliant point). There are a lot more links at the bottom of the link too.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/positive-thinking/SR00009>

This is a summary of why we do Sunday Crafternoon at our house each week

<http://www.relaxationexpert.co.uk/stressbenefitsofmakingart.html>

Seminar Summary: Aviva Finberg (incorporating seminar handout and recommended references prepared by Eliza Muldoon)

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