**Kathy Frazier**

**Title**: **Creative Connections: Innovation and the CPS Process, Becoming an “Innovative Educator”**

**Hot Off the Press Book:** Almossawi, H. (2022). *The Innovator’s Handbook: A Short Guide to Unleashing Your Creative Mindset*. Mossawi Studios LLC.

**Introduction:**

***Honor your vision and let your belief in yourself bring your ideas to life.* ~ Steve Jobs**

This is the underlying theme of the Innovator’s Handbook. Author Hussain Almossawi tells his story as a designer and consultant for influential companies such as Nike, Apple, Adidas, Intel, and Ford Motor. As his story unfolds, he sheds light on the process of innovation and developing an innovator's mindset. He challenges readers to fill their toolkits with skills and practices to develop problem-solving and creativity. This book will inspire and empower you to believe in your ability to innovate.

**What is Innovation**

Innovation is often used as a buzzword and is often interchanged with creativity. I selected this book because I wanted to gain insights and dive deeper into the true meaning of innovation and how it relates to creative thinking strategies and the Creative Problem Solving Process. How might innovation be integrated into an educational setting? The author states: “Real innovation takes something that already exists and reveals a new way of interacting with it, forever changing everything you thought you knew*.*” (Almossawi, 2022) For example:

When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, his goal was to improve communication. Visualize the innovations to the telephone that have taken place over decades from 1876 - 2022. Alexander Graham Bell would surely be surprised to see the creation of the smartphone, an innovation that has changed the world. <https://brilliantio.com/how-did-the-telephone-change-the-world/>

Innovation goes beyond having a great idea. Just as creativity is defined as Big C and Little C, innovation can be as simple as putting your own spin on something that already exists and improving it **or** creating something that will change the world. In the table below, I have created a comparison between the Innovation Process described by the author and the steps of the CPS Model/ FourSight developed by Dr.Gerard Puccio.

**Innovation Process**   **The CPS Model / FourSight**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Innovation begins with a vision / idea that will improve our lives through effectiveness, efficiency, and enjoyment. | The CPS process begins with observation and identifying a challenge or problem that is in need of a solution. |
| **The First Principle Approach** includes identifying and defining your assumptions about an idea. This includes breaking the whole into individual parts (deconstruct then reconstruct), asking “what if” questions, and examining the idea from other perspectives. | **Stage One - Clarify - The Problem Solver**   * Spends time validating the challenge before solving it. * Makes fact based decisions to head toward the right target. |
| **Developing Brand New Solutions:** The innovator begins to synthesize the research, brainstorms, and comes up with multiple solutions. | **Stage Two -Ideate - The Problem Solver**   * Uses their imagination to make connections and play with ideas to achieve novel outcomes. |
| **Creating a Prototype**: By experimenting with the ideas generated, the innovator designs a prototype by putting the product back together in a new way. The prototype is tested and adaptations may be made. | **Stage Three - Develop - The Problem Solver**   * Evaluates ideas to select the best solution/ solutions * Analyzes if the solution will work in the real world. * Formulates an action plan by testing the solution. |
| **Taking Action:** Involves leading the charge to help the idea evolve and become a reality. | **Stage Four - Implement- The Problem Solver**   * implements the action plan. Obstacles may be encountered and further problem solving implemented. |

A research study conducted in 2018 with FourSight and the BridgePoint Effect revealed the thinking profiles of Corporate Innovators from a cognitive perspective. It was not surprising that innovators shared a preference as Ideators and implementers. Read a more elaborate description of the results of the study at

[**https://innov8rs.co/news/the-first-ever-innovator-profile-study-who-we-are-and-why-we-cant-do-it-alone/**](https://innov8rs.co/news/the-first-ever-innovator-profile-study-who-we-are-and-why-we-cant-do-it-alone/)

**Innovation and the Leadership Mindset:** A true innovator takes a leadership role and looks beyond today's trends to tomorrow’s possibilities. In analyzing this section of the book, it came to mind the study of *Creative Leadership - The Skills That Drive Change* (Puccio, Mance, & Murdock, 2011). In today’s fast-paced world, there is a relationship between the concepts of change, creativity, and leadership. The Creative Leadership Model supports “taking action,” the Implementation Stage of the innovation process. Initiating change takes courage, self-confidence, risk-taking, and creative problem-solving. The author describes two types of mindsets in initiating change. I analyzed them using the concept of polarities, Action vs Reaction. The author states, “The innovator walks a tightrope between the two.” (Almossawi, 2022)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| + Creates positive change in the world  + Acts on Implementing an original idea  + Is dynamic, pushes for new creative ideas | + Innovates but in a much smaller box  + Has the skills to improve things  + Reacts to things that are inspirational, changes perspectives. |
| **ACTION** | **REACTION** |
| - Initiating change, may be risky  - Initiating change takes courage | - Not seen as a leading force (Stagnant)  - May have a lack of confidence in implementing an idea  - Is passive, reinterpreting others’ ideas |

**The author outlines the following Creative Strategies to Help Ideas Evolve:**

**Curiosity Tips**

**1. Look Around**

* Be an observer. Find fresh perspectives and deeper connections with your environment.
* Start a Leonardo Da Vinci Notebook (Write down or sketch creative ideas and innovations that come to mind.)
* Utilize the power of biomimicry (Designs modeled on biological entities and processes found in nature)

**2. Be Open Minded**

* Conduct “Question Storming” sessions
* Identify inspiring and “curiosity-firing” moments
* Collaborate: With the right team balance, wonderful ideas can be born out of multiple chain reactions.

**3. Get Curious**

* Open your mind to new possibilities
* Have an evolving mindset

**4. Push Boundaries**

* Step Out of Your Comfort Zone
* Fail Fast and Fail Often
* Design a Vision, take time to continue to let your idea evolve and grow  **Innovator Resources**

**Conclusion:**

This book has expanded my perspective on the specific meaning of “innovation,” and I have discovered many creative connections. Innovation is more than the introduction of a new idea, method, or device. It is a process closely related to the CPS and the Design Thinking Model. The innovator’s “toolbox” of creative thinking skills is a great addition to my creative thinking strategies, and the exercises presented at the end of the book can be integrated into classroom lessons.

To answer my question, "How might innovation be integrated into an educational setting?" I was inspired to conduct further research. *The Innovator’s Mindset* (Couros, 2015) is a perfect resource and focuses on the perspective of how to become an “Innovative Educator.” This book is filled with ideas on creating change in our educational system as the subtitle states: *Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Create a Culture of Creativity.* Some of the main points addressed include what innovation is and is not in education, how to lay the groundwork by building relationships and creating a shared vision, how to unleash talent through strength-based leadership, how to create meaningful learning experiences and make a plan to shift from test-taking to measuring success through portfolios that show student growth. The QR Code includes other suggested resources related to the innovation process and innovations in education and organizations.

Leonardo DaVinci, Thomas Edison, Margaret Knight, and Elon Musk have all challenged the status quo and their innovations have changed society for the better. Enjoy reading this book, gaining insights into the term Innovation, and developing and implementing a creative idea of your own!