

Can the levels of Creative Ability be applied to supervision and development of staff in the workplace?

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Introduction

The Vona Du Toit Model of Creative Ability may add something unique to the development of individuals' participation within the workplace.



Vona du Toit and colleagues developed the Model of Creative Ability that plots a person's occupational behaviour on a continuum from low to high functioning.

To date occupational therapists have applied the model to unwell clients who have challenges to engage in occupations in their everyday living. However, the model with its descriptions of levels of functioning has the potential to be applied to people without illness or incapacities.

The study we are sharing with you today is based on our belief that the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability's developmental perspective may add something unique to the development of individuals' participation within the workplace.

Performance Management -

Can we be more effective?



Performance management is not just for managers

Taken from Armstrong's Handbook of Performance Management 2009

When we are thinking about using the model of creative ability within the workplace, it is within the context of performance management of individuals.

There are many performance management models from a business and human resources perspective available to understand and manage staff's work performance and productivity.

However, performance management is not just for managers – it is a process that any of you who supervise junior staff or students will have a part to play in.

This diagram is just one example of a performance management cycle and most organisations will have similar processes that include aspects such as :

- Setting of corporate or organisational objectives
- Department based goals and objectives
- Employee based objectives
- Competency requirements
- Ongoing review of performance
- Annual reviews / appraisals against objectives
- Development planning to improve future performance

*Our study has potential to enhance the effectiveness of the supervisor or manager in the continuous development process that occurs on a day to day basis – the aspect circled in red.

VdTMoCA from clinical to workplace...

*"Performance management is essentially a **developmental** process that aims to improve the **performance** and **potential** of people through **their own efforts** and with the **help of their managers** and the organisation"* (Armstrong, 2009 p56)

Boxall and Purcell (2003) put forward the 'AMO' model of performance as being:
Ability + Motivation + Opportunity to Participate

We use the VdTMoCA to understand our patients' **motivation** that influences **performance**.

We use the VdTMoCA principles to enable our patients to reach their **potential** through their own efforts and the use of ourselves therapeutically.

Why not apply the same principles in our workplace with the people we supervise to ensure the JUST RIGHT CHALLENGE for work performance?

Armstrong in 2009 stated that *"Performance management is essentially a **developmental** process that aims to improve the **performance** and **potential** of people through **their own efforts** and with the **help of their managers** and the organisation"*

So we have nice key words there such as developmental, performance, potential and effort....

* And an interesting model by Boxall and Purcell recognised **ability**, **motivation** and the **opportunity to participate** in influencing staff performance.

*This is what we do clinically - Using the model of creative ability to understand our patients' **motivation** that influences their **performance**.
And using the model of creative ability treatment principles to enable our patients to reach their **potential** through their own efforts and the use of ourselves therapeutically.

*So you can see where this is heading – why not apply the same principles in our workplace with the people we supervise to ensure the JUST RIGHT CHALLENGE for work performance?

This is what prompted us to explore this further.

Aim of the study

To explore the possibilities of applying the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability (VdTMoCA) in performance management in order to provide a targeted approach for supervisors and managers who need to develop staff.

Phase 1 of the study had the following objectives:

- Translate existing creative ability level descriptors into questions for staff.
- Collect perceptions of staff on their work role and performance.
- Determine fit between interview responses of staff and creative ability level descriptors.

So with these questions in mind we embarked upon a small research study to explore whether the model of creative ability could be applied in performance management in order to provide a targeted approach for supervisors and managers who needed to develop staff.

The first phase of the study aimed to:

Translate existing creative ability level descriptors into questions to use in conducting interviews with a sample of staff

Collect perceptions of staff on their work role and performance through these interviews

And then determine fit between interview responses of staff and creative ability level descriptors.

Methodology

Develop questions for semi structured interviews with employees in the NHS (UK).

CA components	Example Questions
Volition	What are the things that keep you motivated at work on a day-to-day basis? And things that negatively impact on your motivation?
Relating to people	How would you describe your relationship with your colleagues? What part do you play within your team? How much of what you do impacts on the job and performance of work colleagues around you?
Product	What are the aspects of your performance that you need to improve upon? Why? How do you know this? How do you cope with balancing all the demands of the job? Can you talk about type of problems you encounter in your job and how you solve them?
Action / Handling situations	What are the potential conflict situations in your job? How do you handle these conflict situations? Are there aspects of your job that you sometimes avoid? How do you deal with something you have done wrong or failed to do that you were supposed to? How does this make you feel?

The method was a qualitative enquiry with case study design.

The first step was to develop a guide or schedule for questions for semi-structured interviews with employees in the NHS in the UK.

The questions in the interview schedule included the components used in assessment of creative ability.

The table shown here provides examples of some questions asked with their alignment to the components of creative ability from the Creative Participation Assessment tool that was developed by Dain van der Reyden.

Although it was planned that certain questions would elicit information about certain creative ability components, in reality some of the participants' answers better fitted a different component of creative ability, which we accommodated for in the data analysis.

Methodology

1. Ethical approval
2. Pilot Interview
3. Sample of participants
4. Interview transcription
5. Priori coding



Ethical approval was obtained from Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (number 52789).

An information sheet was developed to provide participants with details about the study, and asking if they were willing to be interviewed and recorded. Participants were asked to sign a consent form.

I completed one pilot interview to test if the questions elicited components of creative ability. A few questions were removed and others were added to expand on aspects of leadership that I felt was initially missed out.

The sample for this study was a purposive sample. Varying degrees of experience, length of time in the job, grade or level of the post were included. Qualified and unqualified staff were approached.

As some of the participants had knowledge of the model of creative ability I clarified that the aim of the interview was not to assess their level of creative ability but rather to explore if the components of creative ability were detectable in people performing their duties and responsibilities at work.

I transcribed each interview word-for-word.

A priori coding was used to analyse the data, to determine the fit between the interview responses of staff and creative ability level descriptors.

The items of the Creative Participation Assessment on levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 (passive participation through to competitive participation) were used as the set a priori codes against which we compared the data from the interviews systematically.

Results

6 staff were interviewed:

	Qualified	Unqualified			
Status	4	2			
Grade	Student	Band 3	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7
	1	1	2	1	1
Experience	0-1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10+ yrs
	2	1	1	1	1

Results:

Six people were interviewed. It was difficult to decide how many interviews would be enough. When there was a sense of all components were covered, we started with the coding.

Profile of the sample was 4 qualified staff and 2 unqualified.

1 OT student, 1 band 3 unqualified OT assistant, 2 band 5 qualified OTs, 1 band 6 specialist OT and 1 Band 7 clinical lead OT

2 had less than 1 year experience

1 had between 1-3 years experience

1 had between 3-5 years experience

1 had between 5-10 years experience

1 had over 10 years experience

Building the descriptors – Relating to people

What is your part to play in the team?

"I don't know. I just don't know - you will have to ask the team."

	Passive Participation
Relate to people	Interacts with co-workers but hesitant to initiate interactions; will wait for others to take the lead in conversations. Cooperates in the team but not sure of their part to play in the team. Little understanding or awareness of the impact of own actions within the workplace. Avoids conflict situations (lack of assertiveness skills). Awareness of norms to respect authority figures.

Lets show you how we used the transcribed interviews and the a priori coding to construct sets of descriptors.

So for example during the interviews Sarah asked 'what part do you play in the team?' to ascertain aspects of relating to people within the workplace. One response was * *"I don't know. I just don't know - you will have to ask the team."* During a priori coding we aligned this response to passive participation.

So here we may have a worker who turns up at work because that is their job, but they are just there as an individual rather than seeing themselves as part of something bigger. They may be unsure of their part to play in the team, other than knowing that they have to get their jobs done as they are told.

We used this to construct one of the elements in relating to people, with other participants' responses helping to formulate the other elements.

Building the descriptors – Relating to people

What is your part to play in the team?

"I like to think that I would have a positive influence on other people, whether that's encouraging or supporting them in their development or giving them an extra hand in some way, but very much recognising that each member of the team fits together and playing your part within that as well."

	Active Participation
Relate to people	Conscious of being a positive role model for others within the team. Willing and able to use interpersonal skills (assertiveness and conflict management) to confront issues/difficult situations in familiar context. Ability to pre-empt needs and responses of others and able to select the right approach for the situation (if not too complex). Realises the importance of and invests in interpersonal relationships with co-workers and superiors. Values authority figures and maintains good relationships.

To the same question a different participant answered * *"I like to think that I would have a positive influence on other people, whether that's encouraging or supporting them in their development or giving them an extra hand in some way, but very much recognising that each member of the team fits together and playing your part within that as well."* During a priori coding we aligned this response to active participation.

Here we see a worker who realises the importance of and invests in interpersonal relationships with their co-workers as well as those who may be in a superior role.

Each of the descriptors was built in this way through the a priori coding process.

Example Descriptor – Relating to people

	Passive Participation	Imitative Participation	Active Participation	Competitive Participation
Relate to people	Interacts with co-workers but hesitant to initiate interactions; will wait for others to take the lead in conversations. Cooperates in the team but not sure of their part to play in the team. Little understanding or awareness of the impact of own actions within the workplace. Avoids conflict situations (lack of assertiveness skills). Awareness of norms to respect authority figures.	Enjoys being part of a team. Easily influenced and affected by negative attitudes of team members, may take issues personally. Own impact on dynamics in interpersonal relationships often missed or ignored. Beginning to assert self in familiar situations, would rather avoid conflict; may need guidance. Respects authority figures and accepts instruction from them.	Conscious of being a positive role model for others within the team. Willing and able to use interpersonal skills (assertiveness and conflict management) to confront issues or difficult situations in a familiar context. Ability to pre-empt needs and responses of others and able to select the right approach for the situation (if not too complex). Realises the importance of and invests in interpersonal relationships with co-workers and superiors. Values authority figures and maintains good relationships.	Has the ability to read nuances in complex interpersonal conflict situations and mediate the situation successfully. High level of assertiveness and conflict management skills. Conscientious building of broad networks with significant others and stakeholders to achieve overall outcomes.

And here you can see the resulting full descriptor for relating to people in the workplace across the four levels of creative ability

The interviews and resulting a priori coding enabled us to elicit information about individuals' perception of their own part to play within a team, awareness of their impact on others, how they related to team members, ability to deal with more complex dynamics and foster relationships and networks for getting their job done.

Building the descriptors - Motivation

What are the things that keep you motivated at work on a day-to-day basis?

"Because I'm new I like to get things right. With praise it lifts your mood because you think you are being noticed and people are recognising that."

	Imitative Participation
Motivation	Motivated to perform according to set norms and standards in the workplace. Satisfied with the status quo. Desires/seeks praise from others to maintain motivation.

Here is another example relating to motivation:

To the question: 'What are the things that keep you motivated at work on a day-to-day basis?', one participant answered **"Because I'm new I like to get things right. With praise it lifts your mood because you think you are being noticed and people are recognising that."*

During a priori coding this response was aligned to the level of Imitative Participation where we can see individuals with a desire to seek praise from others to maintain motivation.

Building the descriptors - Motivation

What are the things that keep you motivated at work on a day-to-day basis?

"I'm motivated to do the best I can for the NHS, for the community...we will do the very best that we can do and I really value that. If we weren't the very best we could be... I feel we would be letting the country down."

	Competitive Participation
Motivation	Motivated by self-actualisation , driven by a need to contribute more or do better than others in a positive way. Driven to improve standards. A sense of altruism present.

To the same question another participant answered: **"I'm motivated to do the best I can for the NHS, for the community...we will do the very best that we can do and I really value that. If we weren't the very best we could be I feel we would be letting the country down."*

During a priori coding this response was aligned to the level of Competitive Participation, with a sense of altruism present in the individual's motivation.

Example Descriptor – Motivation

	Passive Participation	Imitative Participation	Active Participation	Competitive Participation
Motivation	Motivated to produce tangible or intangible product. Desire to be part of the team but reliant on team, requiring input and supervision from others to be able to perform roles and responsibilities. Little displayed passion or enthusiasm for the job.	Motivated to perform according to set norms and standards in the workplace. Satisfied with the status quo. Desires/seek praise from others to maintain motivation.	Motivated to achieve norms in an individualistic way. Prepared to contribute and to compare own actions and abilities to others. Individual has a sense of leadership/responsibility for others. Outward looking - a sense of giving more of self. Motivated to stretch oneself.	Motivated by self-actualisation, driven by a need to contribute more or do better than others in a positive way. Driven to improve standards. A sense of altruism present.

And here is the example of the full descriptor we constructed for motivation, with the interviews and resulting a priori coding enabling us to elicit information about individuals' motivation within the workplace and how this changes and develops through the levels of creative ability.

The findings showed that the actions and behaviour of people in employment can be observed in the levels of creative ability.

Items of the Creative Participation Assessment	Amended items for the Work Participation Matrix
Action	Action
Volition	Motivation
Handle tools and materials	Handle work processes and systems
Relate to people	Relate to people
Handle situations	Delegation
Task concept	Role performance Responsibilities – taking ownership Prevocational skills
Product	<i>Captured in other items</i>
Assistance or supervision needed	Assistance/supervision Feedback/evaluation Learning and development
Behaviour	<i>Captured in other items</i>
Norm awareness	<i>Captured in other items</i>
Anxiety and emotional responses	Anxiety and emotional responses
Initiative and effort	Initiative and effort

The findings showed that the actions and behaviour of people in employment can be observed in the levels of creative ability, however we had to make some amendments to be relevant to a work context.

From the process we have just shown you we developed a full matrix with a set of work related items and termed this new instrument the Work Participation Matrix.

In this table you can see the items of the original Creative Participation Assessment are on the left and the eventual items we used for the Work Participation Matrix on the right.

We started off with 17 items for the work participation matrix and ended with 13. Each of those 13 items have associated descriptors for work behaviour for levels 4,5,6 and 7 – Passive Participation through to Competitive Participation.

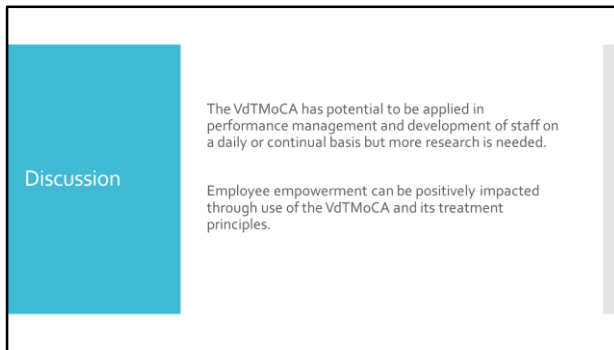
Creative PARTICIPATION within the workplace

Motivation	Action
1. Tone	Purposeless, unplanned
2. Self-differentiation	Destructive or incidentally constructive
3. Self-presentation	Constructive, explorative
4. Passive Participation	Norm awareness, experimental
5. Imitative Participation	Norm compliant
6. Active Participation	Transcend norms, individualistic and inventive
7. Competitive Participation	Competitive centred
8. Contribution	Situation centred
9. Competitive contribution	Society centred

Levels included in this research

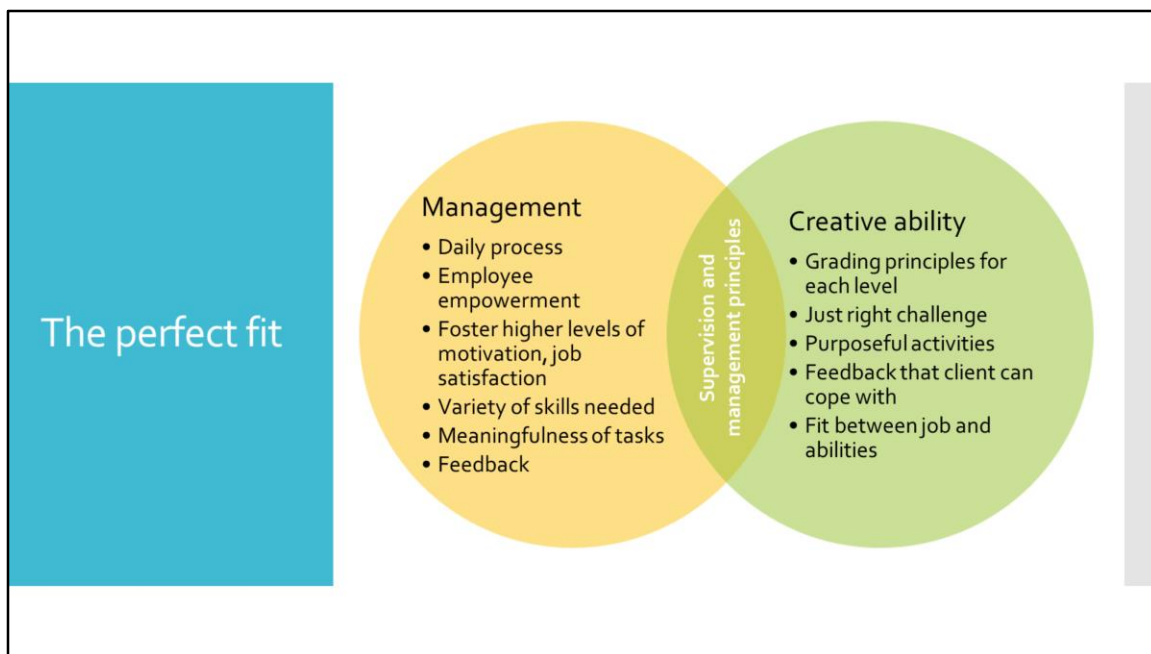
The interview schedule worked well to elicit responses which we could use for descriptors of work participation in the newly developed Work Participation Matrix.

While emerging ourselves in the theory of creative ability and the responses of the participants we realised that the four levels of creative ability that we targeted within the research are actually the participation levels as you can see here in the table. Therefore in the context of work performance it may be more fitting to talk about levels of creative participation than levels of creative ability as we move forwards with our project.



Preliminary findings indicate that the model of creative ability has potential to be applied in performance management and development of staff on a daily or continual basis but more research is needed.

An abundance of literature on performance management is available and we drew upon this to see if there is support for our idea.



Empey in 2016 highlighted the need for immediate managers and supervisors to develop and address staff performance on the spot as a continuous *daily process and not just part of a yearly appraisal.

Meyer in 2013 described the importance of employee empowerment which includes a sense of meaning, choice, competence in their jobs and impact that they have on different levels.

He also highlighted the importance of jobs that should be designed to foster higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction and performance. Jobs can be enriched by increasing the variety of skills needed, identity and meaningfulness of the task, level of responsibility afforded and feedback provided.

*All of these aspects mentioned here can be well managed if we apply the model of creative ability's "treatment principles" to our supervision and management of individual's performance.

*So this gives us the perfect fit in constructing supervision and management principles.

Conclusion

First phase completed with promising results.

Next phase of research:

- 2nd round of interviews with sample from South Africa
- Confirm/reject descriptors within the Work Participation Matrix.
- Content validity

Final phase:

- Supervision guidelines to accompany the matrix
- Content validity

What we have presented today is only the first phase of our research.

From here we will seek ethical approval to conduct a second round of interviews with a South African sample. We will use the same interview schedule but would like to understand more about professional boundaries and behaviour in the work place.

The data from these interviews will be used to confirm or reject the items and level descriptors in the Work Participation Matrix as a valid representation of the construct of performance management in health care professionals.

After that we will test the content validity of the Work Participation Matrix by sending it out for expert opinion on the relevance and clarity of each item and each level descriptor.

Finally we aim to utilise the treatment principles from the model of creative ability to develop additional supervision principles for supervisors and managers to use. Again these would be tested through a content validity process.

So, this is where we are with our project to date and we are fortunate to share it with you all who are also creative ability enthusiasts. Your questions, comments and ideas will really be appreciated as we are embarking on unknown ground.

Thank you

Questions?



References

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