6.7: Project Assignment – Auruna Haque

Assemble a portfolio of documents to represent your creative abilities and creative experiences. This portfolio should include:

➔ the three or more cover letter paragraphs that you drafted on the previous page

2. *Proactively identify product, service or process pain points and opportunities for improvement.*

I have consistently experienced a multitude of teams within wider organisations to produce completed projects. [By using analogy mapping, I can suggest how certain entities within a set of stakeholders parallels other broader systems, which may seem unrelated at first but can contribute to creative problem solving. For example, how organic or anatomical systems function could inform how our product is delivered, i.e. production on a mass scale. Analogies represent how solutions within the wider world could be transferred to our product's improvement, elongating its durability within the market – a lot of solutions to similar systems exist so using that for our company would be innovative; I would be excited in showcasing this type of mapping more over this next year.]

3. *Capture, represent and understand the real motivations, needs and values of diverse stakeholders within and beyond the organisation.*

Within my last few roles, I have worked closely with children to support and deliver education, through 1:1 exercises, groups, and even whole-class teaching. There have been times when I have needed to manage groups of students to complete a developing project where their parents and carers are involved, such as Class Assemblies and Christmas productions. [In order to capture the true needs of parents/carers, I used empathy maps to categorise certain thoughts as a way of grasping their true vision and how their role plays a crucial part in these projects. I feel that I can perform empathy maps for a range of stakeholders; transferring this expertise across a wide array of industries could be enhanced through my chance to work with a range of projects within your company in the next year.]

4. *Initiate, develop and sustain a culture of creativity within individual teams and throughout the organisation.*

There have been times throughout my previous roles where different individuals have had to work together to successfully complete a project solving a problem. [I have initiated creative support by ensuring there is psychological safety within my teams, so that all individuals' contributions feel valued. This ties in with reminding my teams that we have a common vision and mission; we are a singular organisation with a shared sense of meaning and value towards a common goal, therefore I believe that teams should be diverse and have a level of autonomy to ensure a creative culture thrives. I would love to expand my skillset of sustaining this culture by having more input in process management and idea implementation; I have shown this when making backdrops and managing students in whole

class/year productions. Transferring these skills to your company and coordinating our values and beliefs would ensure future opportunities for us are enhanced further.]

➔ your own job description (300-400 words), (re)written to emphasise the requirements for creative work

The most successful candidate:

1) Can be an effective creative leader who allows their creative team to thrive and ensures diversity and autonomy of ideas and selves. Must be able to ensure psychological safety within their group by ensuring every individual in their team is accepting of other team members and their ideas, avoiding personal criticism.
2) Must be open to experience and tolerant to ambiguity whilst being assured in their creative confidence.
3) Maintains the top-level support of our organisation by ensuring all members follow the *mission and vision* of the company, i.e. shared values for our common goals.
4) Is willing to permit a creative culture that stems together creative individuals, effective teamwork within positive-enforcing leadership in our organisation.
5) Effectively understands then implements robust solutions that addresses the stakeholders' array of needs with careful consideration for our target audience but also how our product affects the wider society's needs.
6) Has undertaken or willing to undertake bias training, in regard to diversity but also in terms of metacognition, i.e. unconscious bias as well as authority bias, false consensus bias, etc.
7) Can provide comprehensive graphic elicitation through visual thinking, in the form of graphs and diagrams to represent how different entities interact with each other, to help define the problem and the systems we are placed within.
8) Can analyse problem-solving with analogy-mapping or SCAMPER tools to comprehensively gather diverse perspectives of the problem.
9) Has studied and used the *Six Hats* process to mitigate idea generation but can use this across areas of problem definition and solution development too.
10) Is able to show brainstorming techniques and further categorise ideas to make idea generation concise yet helpful.
11) Implements true creative problem-solving that evokes design thinking through a range of creative tools, showing a thorough understanding of people/stakeholders' needs. Can explore their problems and solutions successfully through an evident use of creative tools.

I am an innovative individual with eclectic interests who has worked within the education sector for the last 4.5 years, now making an early career shift into software development and IT. I have a diverse range of experience working front-line and part-time with students across tutoring and school settings, whilst training on courses in my spare time in coding and creative training.

I feel that I am an innately creative individual who is always learning. My technical skill in front-end development is enhanced by my CPD experienced during my time as a teaching assistant in addition to Cambridge Advance Online's (CAO) *Creativity, Problem Solving and Design Thinking* course. With the latter, I undertook a long project assignment which evaluated how creative tools, like analogy-mapping, SCAMPER and the Six Hats methods, could analyse and evaluate creative problem solving more effectively. As a TA, I undertook a range of diverse projects, including writing, rehearsing and filming a Christmas production. This project involved a wide array of creative abilities like scriptwriting, performance, designing the stage, costumes and backdrop, across technical and physical crafts. An experience like this has shown that I can work under time pressure to create a performance that is both memorable and entertaining for all stakeholders involved. I can use brainstorming with these other creative tools to inform an idea generation process and I feel confident that I can translate these skills into the technology and arts/cultural sectors to ensure my design thinking shows the most successful embodiments of an idea by creatively solving problems for society.

The theory I obtained from CAO and my experience in the education sector will help inform my approach to future project work whilst maintaining a successful creative culture, that is diverse and supportive, within future organisations I will work with.

➔ log of creativity training activities undertaken, including courses, on-the-job training and mentoring, (re)written to emphasise the distinctions between what was gained from each activity

- Team-building as part of an *Outdoor Learning CPD* at Riversdale Primary School (London): working with other teaching assistants in groups to build tents; using problem definition and verbal brainstorming techniques on top of trial and error to build a suitable tent of shelter for the team

- Project-work and deliberation amongst decision-making across every job I've been involved with requires a confrontation with cognitive biases; most involve teamwork – I need to confront biases like conformity and addition bias whilst working around any conflicts arising from divergent ideas across teams

    ➢ Explore Learning's *Prodeceo Training* included unconscious bias training

- Mentoring and training as a *Visitor Experiences Volunteer* at the V&A Museum: e.g. working in groups to brainstorm ideas for a type of visitor who wants to see what is available for children at the V&A even though it does not specialise in objects/exhibitions specifically for children

- Technical training on *Software Development Skills Bootcamp* with Just IT: coding involves a lot of problem solving, not just for technical skills but also in group work – analogy mapping could help as certain products or websites made could mirror other apps that have worked successfully, enhancing final products furthermore

➢ **CAO**:
- SCAMPER and Six Hats processes to mitigate idea generation – could be translated for long projects like Christmas productions or any lengthy project
- (re)stating the problem so as to understand it fully – can translate this to working life where problem solving is everywhere
- Visual and systems thinking relates to every discipline; occurs in a school setting where students derive from different backgrounds so understanding how certain entities interact with each other could allow us to better understand factors like class, race, gender, age, etc
- Visual thinking through diagram types and graphic elicitation is used across most sectors: used in my workplace to show hierarchy of leadership in our work diaries (e.g. *LSAs > TAs >Trainee Teachers > ECTs > Teachers > Subject Leaders > Assistant Heads > SLT > Headteacher > Governors*)

During my time as a primary school teaching assistant, I experienced a variety of different projects amongst a myriad of different skills and tasks. One prevalent project was our Christmas production which involved two year-groups each, spanning four classes within each play. This project was interesting as it is an annual event therefore lessons can be learnt and built upon for improvement every time.

The creative process of this production involved general approaches and creative tools in addition to acknowledging our cognitive abilities and biases; these elements all sat within a creative context that included: the individual (every staff member and student), a team (team of adults with these classes), a creative leader (teacher/s) and the organisation itself (the school with Senior Leadership).

Before creatively solving the problem itself, it was useful to use metacognition to reflect upon an individual's cognitive abilities, which helps in the way we define a problem before solving it. *Divergent thinking* seemed to be useful as this generates an array of ideas of performance from a stimulus, i.e. our Christmas play's script. However, there are many staff members involved in the play so *convergent thinking* could be best as this evaluates and selects from a variety of ideas to identify the best few for further consideration. Having to evaluate our own cognitive biases was interesting and showed how decision making can be affected by this; I reflected upon how I'm prone to: conformity bias, authority bias, familiar solution/process/function bias and how other people in my team have psychological ownership bias as well as false consensus bias (perhaps even owning some of these myself including 'bias bias').

The creative process involves problem definition, idea generation and solution development; the general approaches of visual and systems thinking could be used interchangeably for each stage, alongside creative tools like: brainstorming, analogy mapping, SCAMPER, the Six Hats and idea evaluation.

I'm quite accustomed to brainstorming so I feel comfortable with this method already, but I really enjoyed using visual and systems thinking to not only represent the graphic elicitation of different entities and diverse boundaries at play within a creative organisation and its stakeholders, but to also use this to represent analogy mapping. A Christmas production involves a wide-ranging distribution of staff as well as students, and these entities parallel systems outside of a school setting, like *bees : pollen :: teachers : knowledge.* Although some analogies may seem far-reaching, I found it effective in seeing how different solutions for other scenarios could be transferable to my school production's scenario. I acknowledged how the empathy maps could be used to understand problems in further depth, by

reflecting on factors that affect certain stakeholders and how this could be used to solve our 'problem' i.e. project better.

With idea generation, SCAMPER and the Six Hats method felt relevant. I liked how each 'hat' mitigates the input that each team member has with the blue hat being able to manage the process; I feel that this successfully controls what ideas can be transferred to solve the problem without conflict arising too much, with SCAMPER being used to enhance certain ideas. For example, I could *rearrange* or *adapt* certain aspects of the performance to make it feel more unique and thus engaging to the audience, such as putting the 'end' of the play at the beginning; although risky, it's fun to consider ideas like this to emphasise creative problem solving.

The creative context is another aspect that is important; I feel that having a creative organisation with motivated and appreciated individuals at its root is what enhances the creative culture of a place, where projects thrive successfully, and problems are solved with effective design thinking. Having top-level support, ideal resources and even nice small rewards for not just the students but the hard work of teaching staff helps to encourage the process towards its deadline, with satisfaction once it is over. Henceforth, creativity in problem solving helps us to understand stakeholders' needs and explore problems and solutions effectively to improve design thinking.