

Grant Given for Creative Solution Problem Research

Eugene - Mental attitude, personal involvement, and conflict may be among the vital factors in the production of creative solutions to problems, according to Dr. Ray Hyman, associate professor of psychology at the University of Oregon.

Dr. Hyman has recently received a \$5,000 grant from the General Electric Foundation for the second consecutive year for this research on the factors which inhibit or stimulate creative problem-solving, particularly in technology and science.

In one series of experiments during the past year, groups of university psychology students were presented with a problem involving ways of encouraging European tourists to visit the U.S. Each group was asked to list either the advantages or the disadvantages of common or uncommon solutions to the problem, and then come up with their own solutions.

The experiment created two different conditions, under which the information was absorbed, setting up either positive or negative mental attitudes toward the information.

On the whole, those who had listed the advantages tended to incorporate these solutions into their final essays, while those who had listed the disadvantages tended to avoid use of these solutions.

"The effect of the induced negative attitude toward the obvious or common ideas seems to have 'blocked' the subjects in this group from employing themes they otherwise would have incorporated into their solutions," Dr. Hyman explained.

"As a consequence, these subjects produced solutions by using new themes, ones that were more novel. . . We are tempted to suggest that their solutions, therefore, are somewhat more 'creative' than those produced by the other groups," he said.

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