

Creativity in the Workplace

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The Importance of Creativity

- Creativity provides the basis for innovation, but...
 - *What is creativity?*
 - *How is it different from innovation?*

Creativity and Innovation

- Creativity
 - Ideas or solutions that are both novel and (potentially) useful (Amabile)
- Innovation
 - The change resulting from a creative idea or product
- Companies typically focus on innovation processes, but have problems with creativity

Key Challenges with Creativity

- Evaluating creativity
 - How to we recognize creative ideas with potential?
- Enhancing creativity
 - How can we increase creativity?
- Accepting and using creativity
 - Creativity implies change, and change can be a threat

Recognizing and Evaluating Creativity

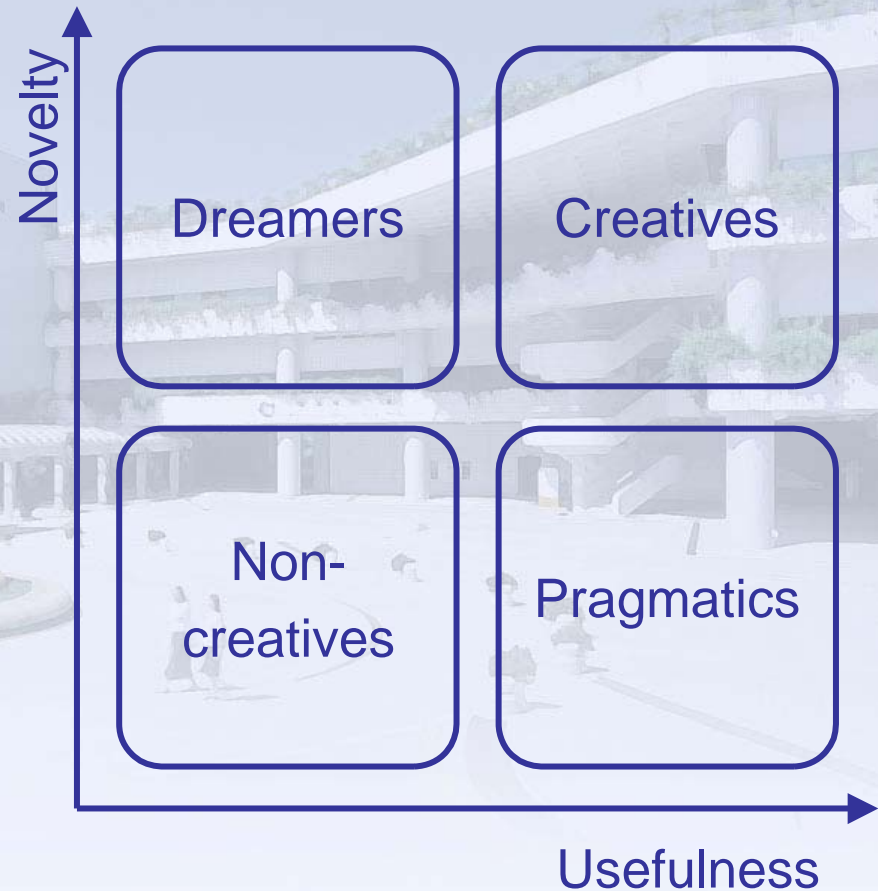
- Evaluating novelty appears easy
 - Uniqueness, or divergence in thinking
- Evaluating usefulness is more tricky
 - How can we tell if something is useful?
 - Usefulness also depends upon acceptability... a social issue rather than a technical one

A Brief Digression on the Acceptability of Creativity

- Novelty (divergent thinking) and Usefulness (convergent thinking) appear to opposing concepts
 - Divergent thinking can damage group cohesion
 - Potentially greater problem with Asians
 - “Group think” example of excessive convergent thinking

Measuring Creativity

- Creativity has two parts (N, U), but existing measures give a single score
- What would a two dimensional measure look like?



Why Evaluation Matters

- First step in managing creativity is to be able to measure it
 - For global companies, it is important to know whether everybody agrees on what creativity is

Creativity Lies in the Eye of the Beholder

- Assessment depends upon context
 - What is creative in one context might not be creative in another context
- What determines ratings by the “field” (Csikszentmihalyi) are not well understood yet
- Why does this matter?
 - Evaluations influence acceptance!

Cultural Differences in Defining & Measuring Creativity

- Extensive cross cultural research shows that we all agree on the basic definition of creativity
 - Implicit theories tend to emphasize novelty, but also recognize usefulness as important
- Does this mean that culture doesn't matter? ...

Creativity Lies in the Eye of the Beholder: Culture and Creativity

Question is not

- “How does culture influence creative *outcome*?”

but rather

- “How does culture influence *criteria* used to measure creativity?”

- “How does culture influence the *acceptability* of creativity?”

Cultural Differences in Descriptions of Creative People

By Westerners

- “Innovative ideas”
- “Imagination”
- “Independent”
- “Humor”

We have:

- Same definition of creativity, but
- Different views of creative people

How about our evaluations of creativity?

By Asians

- “Opinionated”
- “Rebellious”
- “Self-Centered”
- “Arrogant”

Cultural Differences in Defining & Measuring Creativity

- Consider the movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (臥虎藏龍)
 - Western audiences found this to be a very stylistically novel movie
 - Chinese thought it was a decent example of a common movie genre
- **Creativity evaluations tell us as much about the rater as the ratee**

Enhancing Creativity

Does rewarding creativity help increase the level of creativity?

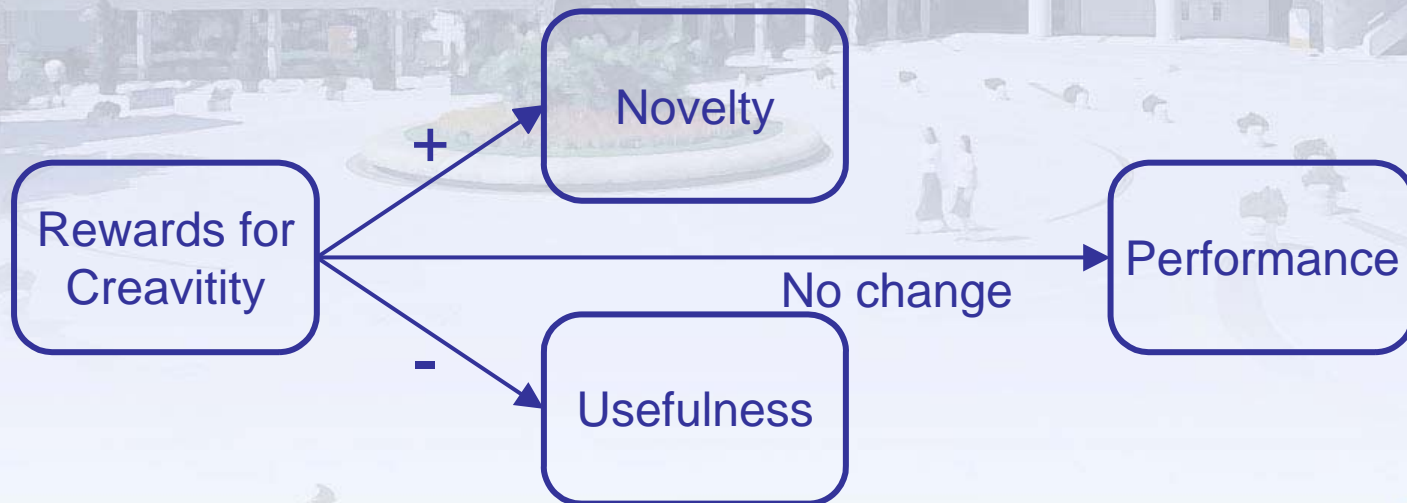
- In short: **NO**
- You do need to pay enough money to attract creative people, but...
 - Promising more money won't make them more creative

Why Rewarding Creativity Doesn't Work: Reason #1

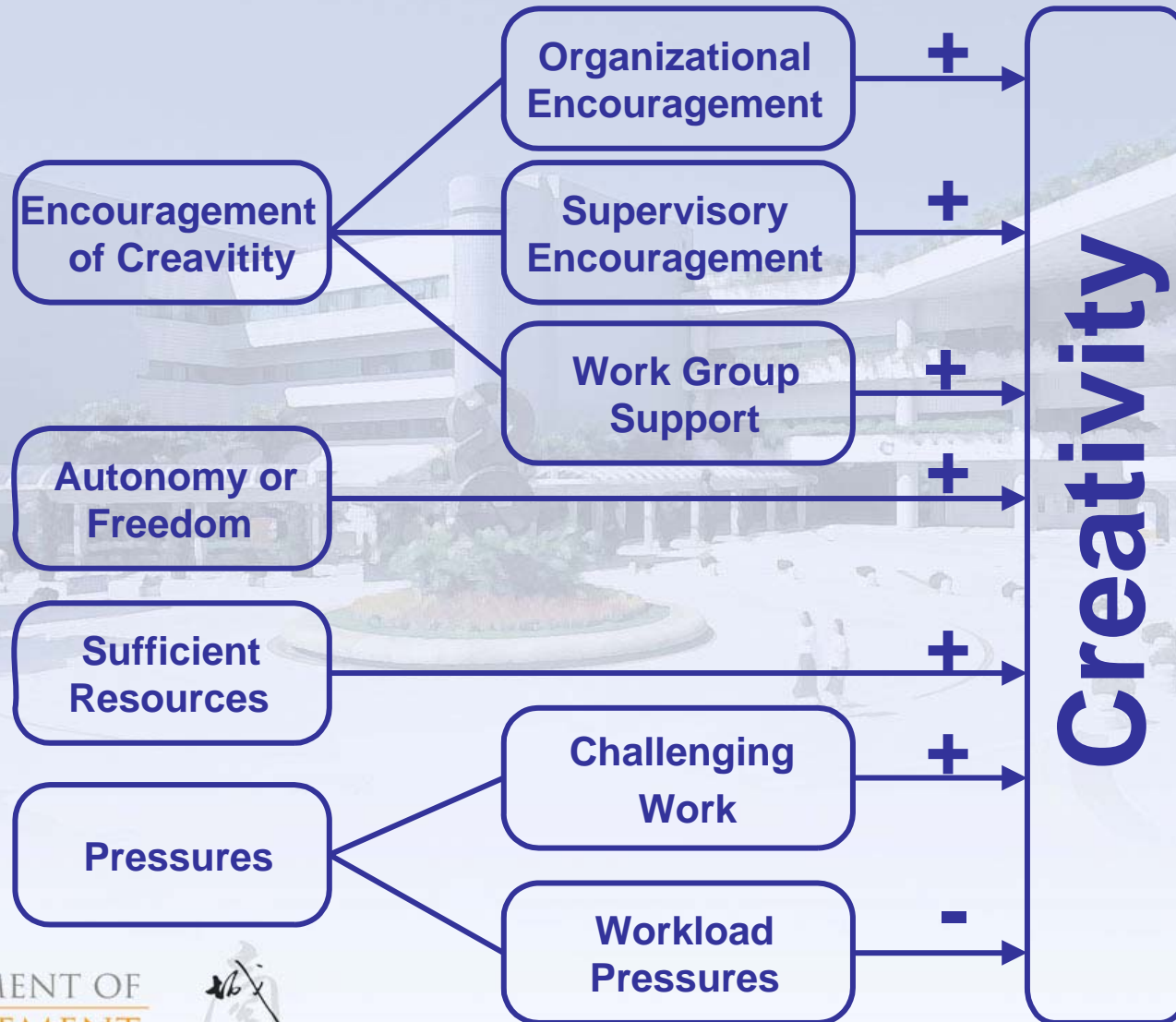
- Creativity appears to be driven by intrinsic motivations, not extrinsic motivations
 - Research shows that reliance upon extrinsic rewards drives out the importance of intrinsic rewards

Why Rewarding Creativity Doesn't Work: Reason #2

- Rewards change the nature of creative expression
 - Implicit theories emphasize novelty, but usefulness is also needed



If Money Doesn't Work, How About Organizational Climate?



Source:
Amabile, T. M., R. Conti, H. Coon, J. Lazenby and M. Herron. 1996. Assessing the work environment for creativity. *The Academy of Management Journal* 39(5): 1154-1184.

Cultural Experience and Creativity

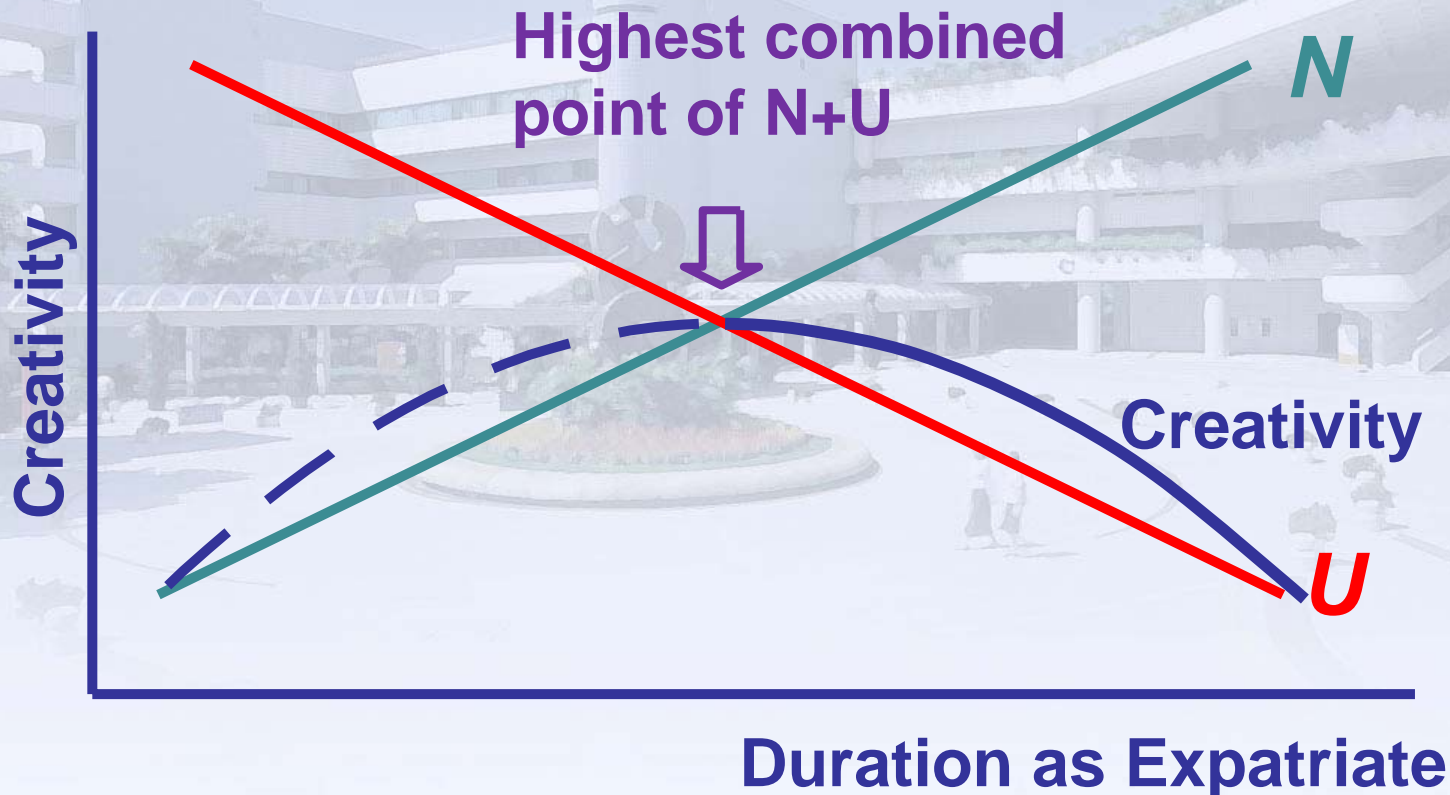
- Bi-culturalism and expatriate experience lead to creativity (Galinsky)
 - Mental flexibility enhanced, which enhances creativity
 - Cross-domain transfer of ideas
 - Insiders appear better at Usefulness
 - Outsides appear better at Novelty

Time, Cultural Experience, and Creativity

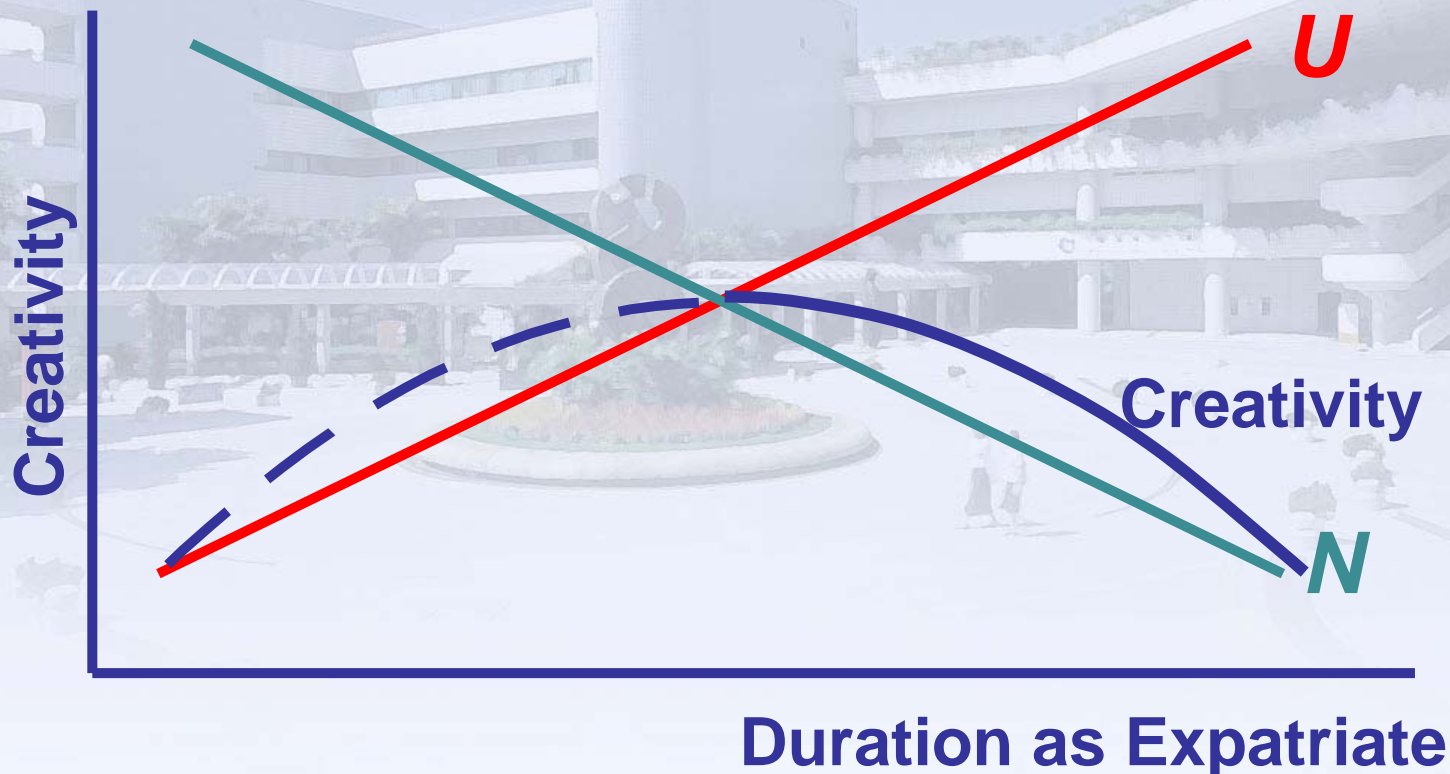
- What happens as you spend more time as an expatriate?



Creativity Applied to Problems at *Home Location*



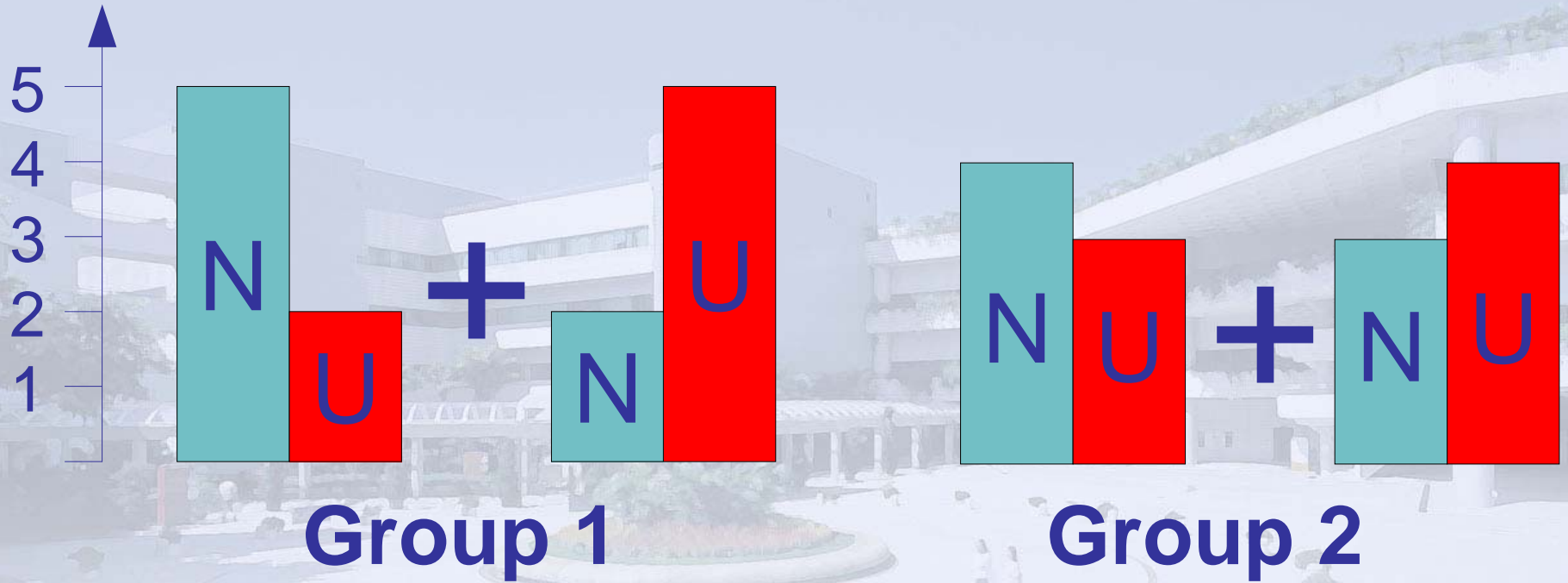
Creativity Applied to Problems at *Host Location*



Creativity in Groups

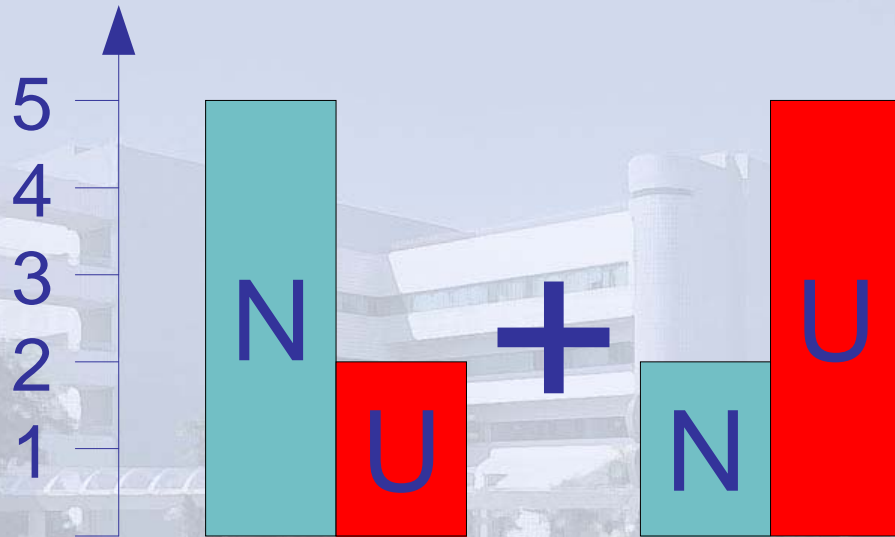
- There is debate over there such a thing as group creativity
 - No, it is just the aggregate of individual creativity (Pirola-Merlo & Mann)
 - Yes, it is the result of synergy in a group with effective team processes (Taggar)

Creative Groups without Creative Members?



Which group will be more creative?

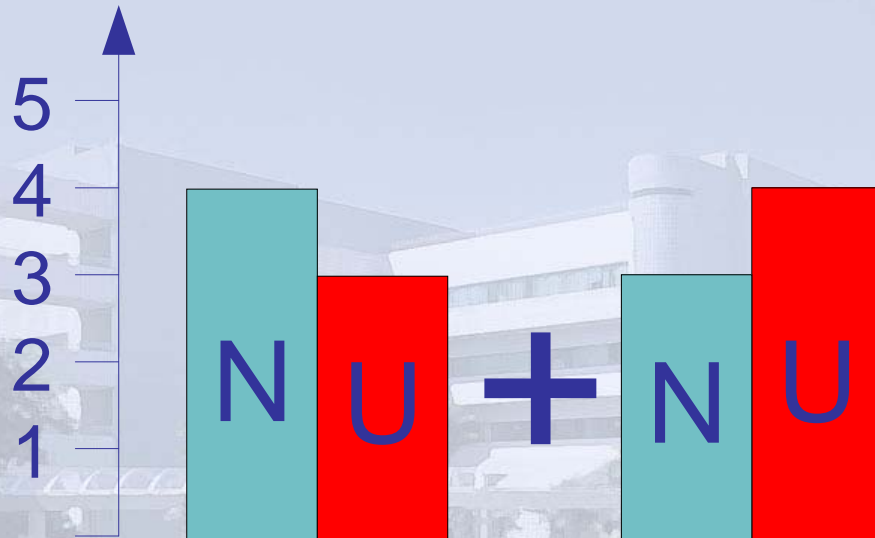
Creative Groups without Creative Members?



Neither group member is creative

If Pirola-Merla & Mann are correct, this group would NOT be creative

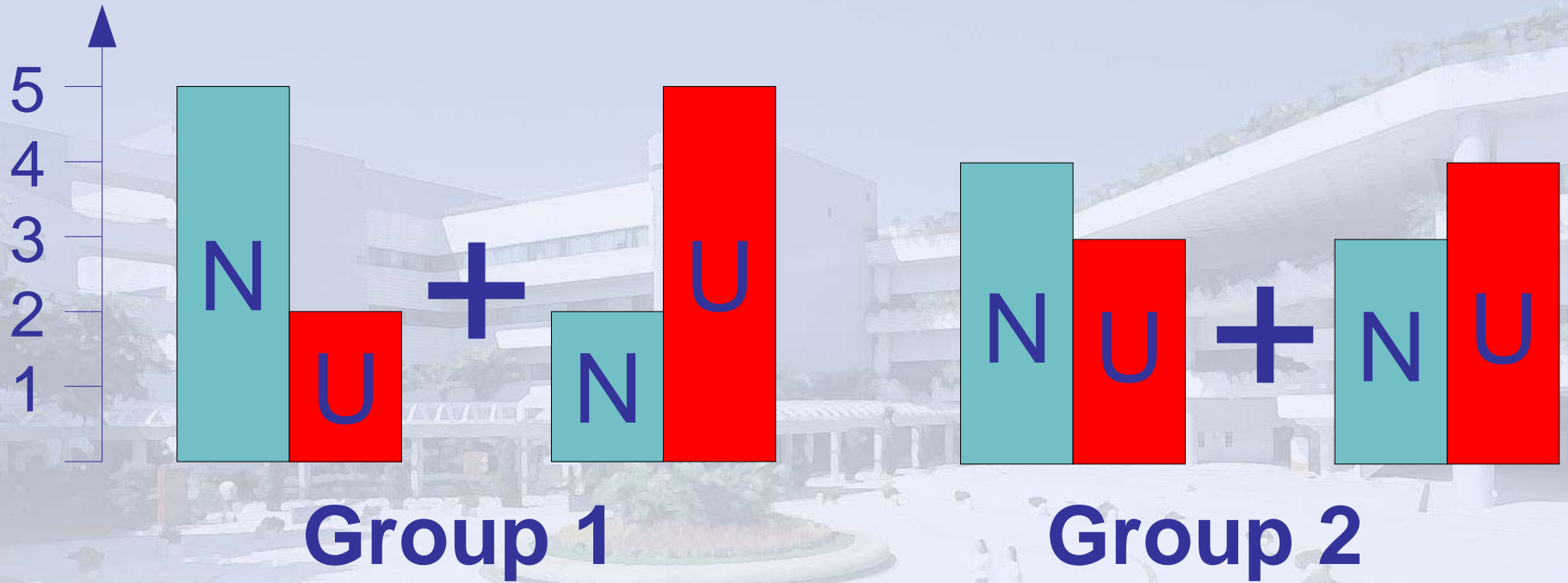
Creative Groups without Creative Members?



Both group members are moderately creative

If Pirola-Merla & Mann are correct, this group would be moderately creative

Creative Groups without Creative Members?



Group 1, but only with which effective group processes creative?

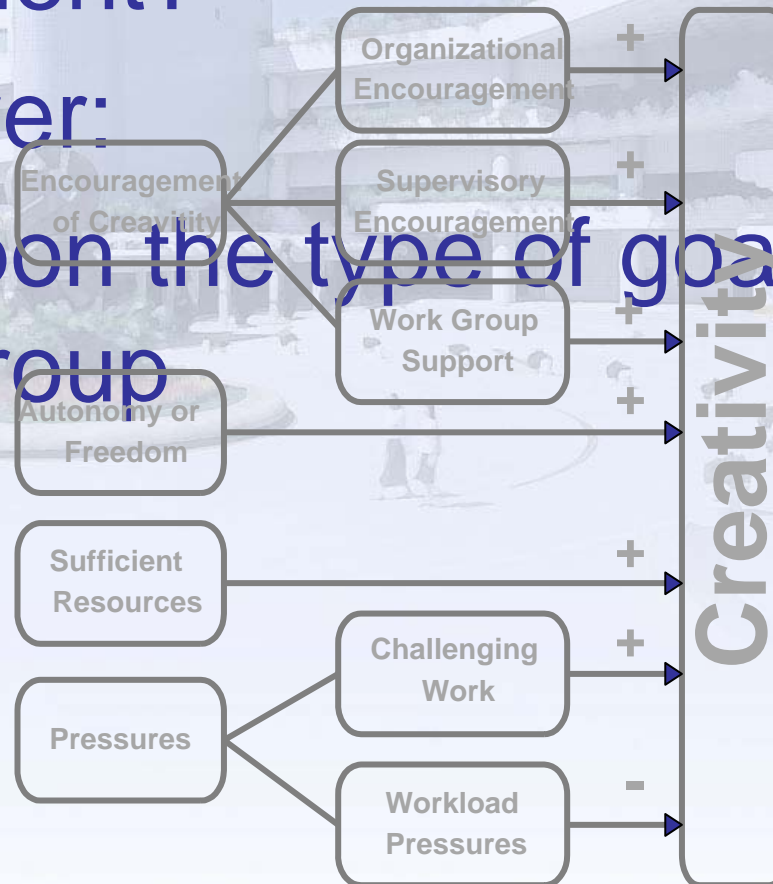
Groups and Their Environment

- Q: How do creative groups respond to their environment?

- Another Answer:

It depends upon the type of goals held by the group

One answer from earlier



Another Perspective: Social Networks and Groups

- Network as a resource
 - Contacts with others provides information, opportunities
- Network as constraint
 - Must maintain good relationships with others in the network
- **Goals appear to determine whether network is a resource or constraint**

Goal Orientation

- Learning goals
 - Desire for mastery, intrinsically oriented, associated with reflection
- Performance goals
 - Driven by external evaluation/rewards, tendency to seek easy goals

Learning Goals and Creativity

- Learning goals normally lead to higher *individual* creativity
 - Knowledge and mastery focus lead to more creative problem solving
- With groups, learning goals are not so clearly positive
 - Learning goals leads group to view external parties as a constraint or demand

Performance Goals and Creativity

- Performance goals normally lead to lower individual creativity
 - “Get the job done”, rather than explore new ways of doing the job
- With groups, performance goals appear to be good
 - Desire for good evaluation leads group to be responsive to external demands.

Conclusion and Summary

Creativity is Influenced by:

- Rewards (and not the way that you would think)
- Culture
 - Evaluation and acceptance of creativity
- Overseas living experience
- Group context
 - Group composition
 - Group processes, such as goals adopted