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# BSM 701 Individual Reflective Report



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## Writer's Profile

Before reading my report, you are welcome to read my profile below in order to have a better understanding of the report.

My name is Wendy and I am going to be 24 years old. I have never got too far from the cosmopolitan world. I was born and raised up in Hong Kong and moved to central London since I was 17. I speak 3 languages fluently and that leave me with a very international background, a blended culture and an open mind. There are all very useful for social networking and later in my career development.

I very much considered myself as a creative individual. My background in is Graphic Design and I am currently in a postgraduate course studying the Creative Economy specialises in Management.

Apart from studying, I very much enjoy working. I learned a lot from my work experiences, they make me understand that in order to work and stand out in the creative industry, excepted the talents and creative skills, it is very the important to have good self-management and an approach of entrepreneurship. I believe this is the key for success and this is the main reason I took my postgraduate course and work towards my goal.

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# 1. Introduction

The report has 4 chapters including the introduction and conclusion at the end. Chapters are break down into different sessions according to smaller topics. In chapter one, there are the background and objectives of this report. Following by the description of the best entries from my blog. Last but not least, the personal assessment in Chapter 3 and that is the highlight of this report.

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## 1.1 Background

This report is a personal assessment for the module titled Creative Economy in a postgraduate course at Kingston University ('MACE' will be used to represent the course in the following text). The module lasted from September to April this year; there are 4 hours lecture per week through out the course. Alongside this assessment report, MACE's students have largely work with teams for their group assignment.

The context of this report is based on two of best entries from my blog (<http://ngwt.wordpress.com>) according to my own opinion. The titles of the entries are: 1. 'A bit less thinking a bit more doing!' dated on 24 Feb 2010, and 2. 'The six thinking hat' dated on 5 Mar 2010.

In the beginning of MACE, we are assigned to set up a personal online blog and put up regular entries as class reflections. The decision to use these 2 posts is because the content of these posts covered the four topics in the GROW model, and more importantly, they are very inspiring among the other entries. Apart from the entries, a rightful amount of the context of this report, in the section of the GROW model, is based on the reflection and experience I had with my team CreativControl.

CreativControl is the name of the company that I have set up with my course mates in MACE. The team worked together to open and registered a business through Young Enterprise and close down the business at the end of April. Through the development of the business, my team had successfully managed to produce and sale a product of a neck pillow called 'Comma'.

The students in MACE have their freedom to choose and form there our own team at the beginning of the course. Most of the team including ours are successfully formed on the one-day dating event that the class hosted. The aim of this event was to find and choose the best teammates through different spectrum and by a few minutes conversation.

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## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this report are firstly, to critically evaluate to what extent I have developed my creative and entrepreneurial management behaviours. Assess the skills and attributes that I have learned by the experience with Creativcontrol. Secondly, a more important objective of this report is to examine the impact from what has happened and illustrate how these will help me to achieve my career goals in the future on completion of my postgraduate course.

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## 2. Description of my blog and the best entries

There are in 29 posts published in my blog, total views add up to 1457 till the date of 12 May 2010. The blog statistics revealed that the post 'How nature does sleeping?' has got the most traffic from the blog. However, this post is not chosen to be my best entries because there were no linkages between the content and my career goal. Besides, it does not covered all the topics of the GROW model. Although I agree that this post is very innovative.

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## 2.1 Post 1: A bit less thinking a bit more doing!

The first best entry is about my reflection after coming back from the New Year break. I decided one of my aims for 2010 is that I need to think less and act more. For instance when I am working for a creative project, I got to step out the thinking bubbles, leave the comfort zone and start creating some work! Thinking too much before actually produce anything is one of the weaknesses of a creator. It reminds me that through out the MACE course, when different teams are still in the process of product development, how many times had the our teacher emphasis on the importance of making a prototype.

My own experience from the past and also with Creativcontrol has also proven the point. I described how I used to be when I was in Art University, going through a creative process. I was also afraid and avoid taking risky ideas. This shown my weaknesses to my approach of leadership, and therefore I want it to be improve.

The entry also talked about how a team can come up with better ideas by observations and by making discussions on our defaults. Default is the standard of image and thought that came across our mind; it is the majority within a group of people. For instance, people from different cultures usually have different defaults.

From revising the post I realised the connection of this post to the topic of creative tension. Culture differences are one of the major causes of creative tension. According to the freedictionary.com, creative tension means 'a situation where disagreement or discord ultimately gives rise to better ideas or outcomes.' The relationship between disagreement and the effectiveness of 'creative tension' are supported by a lot of published works. Arthur Koestler describes 'the point of connection between unfamiliar elements is where the act of creation occurs.' He believes that scientific discovery depends upon 'syntheses' where artistic creativity depends on 'juxtaposition' (Bilton, 2007).

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Additionally, from the book *Management and Creativity* (2007), Chris Bilton believed that within a creative team, the opposition and difference are the starting point for new and unexpected combinations of ideas, and it is where creative tension begins.

*the process of cultural production in the creative industries requires an ability to switch between different ways of working and to connect the detail with the big picture. Such an internalized diversity is only possible if organizations and teams can tolerate opposition and difference.*

In other words, when a team is able to share and accept different opinions among each other's, this is when the team starts and generates better idea.

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## 2.2 Post 2: The six thinking hat

This entry also shared the theme with the first entry – culture differences and creative tension. But on top of that, this entry raises the concern on the need of different styles and approaches of management, in order to fit into cities with different culture.

Writing this post made me realise the important of innovation in an organisation or and for a country. Innovation seems like the only way for a city to improve and to compete among each other, for instance, it has the potential to raise the GDP's of a country. Innovation sustains successful business ideas and prolongs their business.

The post has mentioned the theory of De Bono' Six thinking hats, particularly to the international thinkers. It is worth mentioning because by applying this method to myself, it makes me understand my strengths and weaknesses in respect to thinking style and entrepreneur behaviours. According to the definition of the six thinking hats in [mindtool.com](http://mindtool.com) (Appendix 1), I should have further developed my skills of White and Red hat.

Basically, white hat thinking is about focus on evidence and data, quantitative and qualitative researches are very important to support an idea. And learn how to rely to this research can make outcome more liable. This can also defect my habit of avoiding high risk, since historic data and research are the best tools to reduce risks of a creative project.

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## 3. Application of GROW model

GROW model works as a process or a technique for an individual, however part of the strengths of the model applies equally well for groups' session (Turner, 2009). According to Turner (2009), the model is described as a 'simple and yet powerful framework for navigating a route through a coaching session, as well as providing a means of finding your way when lost.' Therefore, it will be very useful for this report to evaluate and reflect my personal performance for MACE.

### 3.1 Goal

In this part, I will introduce my specific aim and 3 objectives. The desired outcome is to be achieved with the accomplishment of the objectives.

#### Aim

To have found a first permanent job I enjoy paying £20-22,000 per year (at least HKD\$230,000), build a good social network and to reside in Hong Kong by the end of June 2011. I am aiming to work for a creative position at first and when opportunities come, move up to a director level.

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### Objective 1

Broaden my career choices according to my spectrum (Graphic design/ creative economy/ Management). Previously I was only suited to jobs based around practical design skills, but now I have the knowledge to manage these areas as well as work in them. I describe this as horizontal integration of my career. The timescale I set to achieve this goal is before August of 2010.

### Objective 2

Have a vision on the types of company that I would like to work for. For instance, companies in different size, reputation, types of organisation structure and types of organisation culture. Although the majority of companies in the creative industry are mostly SMEs, there are global companies such as WPPs or local success Mother. In addition other companies that are not considered to be in the creative industry may have their in-house creative departments such as Apple, IBM and Virgin.

### Objective 3

Develop and apply entrepreneurial management behaviours, which involves identifying opportunity, creativity and innovation and taking risks. A time scale would not apply into this objective since I consider it to be a continuous improvement.

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## 3.2 Reality

The current part time job that I am working now would not provide me opportunities for a full time and permanent job. The music merchandising company is on discussion stage with another organisation about merging two companies. The chance of taking me on board after the merge is fairly low because they will then have enough in-house designers after joining the workforce.

I was in a dilemma whether to stay in the UK or going back to my home country Hong Kong to seek my first permanent job. The fact that the economy in China is booming, working in Hong Kong will be a very good platform for me to reach the business in China. Therefore I decided to move back after I graduate, although this decision is still very fragile sometimes.

I am aiming at building a good social network in Hong Kong, the fact that I have been away from Hong Kong for almost 8 years. I have lost in touch with some of my good friends and relatives. Also, my social networking skill is not perfect at the moment although generally I am a confidence person.

It is important to have in mind how much salary I am expecting for my first job in order to provide a clear picture for myself. I have based the amount of an average entry level designer in the UK, however, according to Coroflot Designer Salary Survey 2009, the average salary for a graphic designer at the entry level in Hong Kong is only HKD\$200,900, which is 13% lower than the sum that I am aiming for.

When I am applying for a more business-oriented job, the employees consider me as an applicant with creative background and have not enough business knowledge, regardless my postgraduate course.

In terms of the approach to entrepreneurship, I have gain better knowledge in managing creativity and innovation after studying this course. However, I am not sure my performance in identifying opportunity and risk taking.

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When my team Creativcontrol are looking for ways to raise our capital, my teammate Oleg was managed to find a customer is willing to pay us by designing his company logo and letterhead. And that amount of the salary became very important to our business in terms of production cost later on. I see that as a good example of identifying opportunity and good social net working skills.

### 3.3.1 Obstacles

My reality statements revealed that the obstacles that stopping me getting from where I am now to where I want can are coming from myself and other forces like environment.

I have been living in London for a long time; I love and get used to the environment and culture. I enjoy the living style and the freedom I have here, which I will not get in Hong Kong. I fear to give up my friendships and future in here, going back to Hong Kong seems like moving into a new environment for me although it is my homeland.

Obstacles come from myself includes my personality and social skills. I should be aware that sometimes I am being too frank and blunt in conversations with others. There is a different way of communication with colleagues and friends. Also, my part time job and studies has kept me busy form socialising with friends. These could deterrent my relations to my current friends and prevent me to build a better social network.

My creative background and skills are my spectrum; they are keeping me away from applying jobs with more of a business side. I have received comments from a recent interview that the organisation are worried that since I am coming from a creative background, they will need to spend a long time to teach me skills for certain skills.

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I am not leaving the UK till November 2010, after I have finished writing and handed in my dissertation. Without being in Hong Kong, the only way for me to look up vacancies is through the Internet, as well as making contacts that will be useful for my career. It would have a better result if I am in Hong Kong and things can be done face to face.

One of the best ways to learn and develop my approach to entrepreneurship is to read from the success and model from the past. I read a lot articles online and some useful blogs by using the Google search. However, I don't have a reading habit in general and I am lacking a list of websites or blogs that I think its worth for visiting everyday. I had also discovered a lot of self-help models and related theories through studies, which could help me to develop and maintain my skills.

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## 3.3.2 Options

My options to defeat the fear from moving back to Hong Kong would be to discuss the issues with other people, who had also studied in UK and moved back to Hong Kong in these recent years. By hearing their experiences I would know more about what I am expecting for my future.

Develop a regular schedule to connect with friends through different channels. This will help me to recreate and maintain a good social network.

Acquire more knowledge in the business side. It can be done by reading books and reading online materials.

Research on possible companies to work for, find out the job responsibilities and requirements for related jobs. Evaluate my own experiences in work experience / internships. Make a list of the people that I could contact to and asks for suggestions and recommendations.

Take advantages of delicious.com, to organise and save the web pages that I think it would be useful in the future. Also, allocated a daily timeslot that I would focus on reading online information.

According to growthink.com (2010), there is Four Step to Entrepreneurship, which I found it very useful. After identify opportunity, we need to analyse it. It was suggested to keep a journal of opportunities that we discovered each times, and access the likelihood for it to success. Then after that, we can select the most potential one by valuing their cost. After making a firm decision, entrepreneur should stay focus and executed his idea, work very hard towards the selected opportunity.

*Understanding the four steps to entrepreneurship enables entrepreneurs to better understand the path that they are embarking upon. It is a path filled with potential pitfalls, but also filled with tremendous excitement, satisfaction and potential to build enormous value.*

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## 3.4 Way Forward

Start from the week on 17 May, there will not be any class from the University; I will only have to work 2 days per week for my part time job. I should take advantage for this free time and set up a schedule for myself for the next 5 months. The schedule should be on a daily basis, organise the timetable to read online materials apart other from doing research and writing for the dissertation.

I should also take the advices from Growthink to keep ‘a journal of hat details the myriad of opportunities they come across each day.’ Although I don’t have any plans to set up my own business in a short time, but eventually I might and moreover, it is very important for me to understand and obtain the entrepreneurial behaviours, and to work in the creative industries.

On a weekly basis, I should set up couple of meetings to reconnect with the friends I have met from University and also the ex-colleagues that I have met from work. These can help me to expand and maintain my social network. I should also review my CV and keep my online portfolio update. Research for job opportunities and send applications, since the part-time job I am having now are not entirely stable.

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## 4. Conclusion

This report has helped me to identify my career goal. I have a clearer picture of what I want to do after I graduated from MACE. In a very large extent, I have further developed my skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship. I have recognised my weaknesses and found my options to improve it by using the GROW model. So far, I have no intention to start my own business; my goal is to find a permanent job in a creative position and work towards the stairs to a director level.

The end.

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## Appendix 1- Six Thinking Hats

Each “Thinking Hat” is a different style of thinking. These are explained below:

### White Hat:

With this thinking hat, you focus on the data available. Look at the information you have, and see what you can learn from it. Look for gaps in your knowledge, and either try to fill them or take account of them. This is where you analyze past trends, and try to extrapolate from historical data.

### Red Hat:

Wearing the red hat, you look at the decision using intuition, gut reaction, and emotion. Also try to think how other people will react emotionally, and try to understand the intuitive responses of people who do not fully know your reasoning.

### Black Hat:

When using black hat thinking, look at things pessimistically, cautiously and defensively. Try to see why ideas and approaches might not work. This is important because it highlights the weak points in a plan or course of action. It allows you to eliminate them, alter your approach, or prepare contingency plans to counter problems that arise.

Black Hat thinking helps to make your plans tougher and more resilient. It can also help you to spot fatal flaws and risks before you embark on a course of action. Black Hat thinking is one of the real benefits of this technique, as many successful people get so used to thinking positively that often they cannot see problems in advance, leaving them under-prepared for difficulties.

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### Yellow Hat:

The yellow hat helps you to think positively. It is the optimistic viewpoint that helps you to see all the benefits of the decision and the value in it, and spot the opportunities that arise from it. Yellow Hat thinking helps you to keep going when everything looks gloomy and difficult.

### Green Hat:

The Green Hat stands for creativity. This is where you can develop creative solutions to a problem. It is a freewheeling way of thinking, in which there is little criticism of ideas. A whole range of creativity tools can help you here.

### Blue Hat:

The Blue Hat stands for process control. This is the hat worn by people chairing meetings. When running into difficulties because ideas are running dry, they may direct activity into Green Hat thinking. When contingency plans are needed, they will ask for Black Hat thinking, and so on.

Source: [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED\\_07.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_07.htm)