

## zhb Higher Education Research Colloquium Series



### Guest Talk: Prof. Arthur Cropley, PhD. (Emeritus)

#### Creativity in Engineering A technology-oriented aesthetics of creativity

In the past 2000-3000 years, creativity has been equated with sensitivity and aesthete. After the „Sputnik crisis“ in 1957 however there was a call for creative engineers that were to design and build new machines for solving human problems. Even though the term creativity today is not limited to the fine arts any more, there are major differences between the purely aesthetic and a technology-oriented understanding of creativity. A failed artwork for example can still be praised as highly creative attempt to conquer borders. Should an engineer however build a bridge that collapses, it is a catastrophe or even a crime. In the technological sciences thus, creativity is – beyond creating something new – bound to create concrete, true-to-life and practically relevant products. But how do we see creativity in such products? How can we determine the degree of creativity of a technological product in a systematic and stringent way? And how can we compare products – even from different fields – regarding the involved creativity and explain their strengths and weaknesses to students? For doing so, you need a technology-oriented aesthetics of creativity. Such an aesthetic will – of course – be characterised by newness. But it goes beyond that and encompasses relevance, usefulness, elegance and genesis.

Prof. Arthur Cropley was born in South Australia in 1935. He studied educational sciences and psychology at the University of Adelaide and – after 4 years of school service and 5 years in Australian military service he gained his doctorate in 1965 at the University of Alberta (Canada). After that he was active at the University of Regina (Canada) and the University of Hamburg. Since he has been an emeritus professor (1998) he was visiting professor (1 semester/year) at the University of Latvia in the framework of the Johann Gottfried Herder programme.

He wrote 27 books that have been published in many languages (amongst them: Hungarian, Latvian, Chinese and Korean) and app. 200 other publications. His research focus is creativity, with a focus on non-traditional fields like sports, ergo therapy, criminality, and technological sciences. This focus has sensitized him for a cross-departmental understanding of creativity. Together with his son, David Cropley – who is Prof. of Engineering at the University of South Australia, he is grappling with this topic intensely; particularly with regard to the educational system.

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Vogelpothsweg 78 (CDI-Building), Room 114 | Hochschuldidaktik // Hochschulforschung