

Creativity is often thought of as a painter madly trying to get all of their wild ideas on a canvas as the inspiration courses through them or of someone like Beethoven composing dramatic and epic symphonies that changed everyone's views on music, and while those are certainly creative types of people, the type of creativity seen in our education system is present in a much more subtle way. We think of those creator as people who inherently have that ability where in reality it is a combination of many things like years of training, an environment built to support their creativity, and/or validation. In schools we want to teach the foundations of creativity so later in life when a student may have a subject they are adept in, or a subject they have lots of interest in, they have the skills to allow themselves to be creative. The other aspect of creativity in schools in to teach students to think critically about information around them, and to problem solve. Through education, our goal is not for every student to become the next great inventor, or composer, but instead, whatever profession they pursue or activities they enjoy, that they do not become just a cookie cutter or rule follower at whatever cost type of person. A person is not born creative, but has been brought up in an environment where it was appreciated and has therefore put effort into maintaining that ability.

We are creative as a means to communicate and to problem solve. An architect could have a passion for designing buildings because they appreciate the beauty of the structures and because this is how they express their artistic abilities. Although, they could also become architects because they began noticing that in general buildings were created to be beautiful and

functional to the general public, but that they were not accessible to everyone. This architect would be driven by creative problem solving and implementing solutions rather than a need to communicate and express ones self. There is no specific way to be creative and it will appear different in every person depending on their interests and skill sets, but creativity exists in everyone. Creativity can make learning more fun because school changes from a place where you exist for 8 hours and fill in the blanks on work sheet after work sheet to a place where all the crazy ideas and thoughts you have floating around in your head have the potential to come to life and can evolve into plans and goals.

As mentioned above, creativity is often thought of something that exist in the explicitly creative classrooms like art and music so, as students, we tell ourselves that if we are not capable of playing an instrument or painting then we cannot consider ourselves creative. It is an attitude and way of problem solving that applies across domains, from engineering, to biology, to business. (Davis, 2018) Creativity can make learning more fun. It can create an opportunity to students to decide what interests them and they learn to be engaged in the subject more. If creativity is introduced and used in all classrooms what we will find is that students start believing their ideas are important, they develop their ability to find ideas, brainstorm, think productively, and solve problems. If used effectively you may find that they become more flexible with ideas and the idea of failure because we take away the need for the “right” answer. When a teacher shows a bias in how they mark or respond to ideas by appreciating only ideas that are functional or most in line with the teachers own thoughts then the child learns to conforms which is the opposite of the goal of incorporating creativity

There is an increasing amount of global problem that we want solutions for and most solutions the average person finds are ones based in solutions we already use. Inspiring creativity in the classroom means that we allow students the freedom to think outside the box and problem solve in ways that we have not looked at before. This freedom and type of problem solving increasing our chances that the new idea will yield new results long term instead of going in the same circles again and again. When we think in regards to Climate Change and the inevitable demise of our planet our answers are mainly the same two solutions, stop fossil fuels and reduce, reuse, recycle, and while there is certainly value in those answers scientists are saying that its not enough. What we really need is people who are not afraid of being wrong working on the case because they will surely think outside the box and develop new solutions. allowing the logical brain to go away and making way for different ways of seeing like deep seeing and imagination to come through. These different ways of seeing give us time and room to really work through the problem.

In order for creativity to appear in the classroom the students need to be able to trust the environment that they are in because students are first testing out their abilities they need to know that the teacher appreciates them trying even if it results in a failure. It is understandable that teachers can become very focused on meeting all of the curriculum outcomes in a limited amount of time and as a result become hyper focused on staying on task and learning only what they need so the class can move on to the next unit of study uninterrupted. By doing this and not leaving time and space for exploration and independence a teacher could slowly squash ideal environment for creativity. applying creativity in the classroom means that you have students

who can think outside the box, receive information from teachers and think critically about that information. It has the opportunity to create innovators and inventors, but it also creates people who can see past the original issue and think critically about the issues that surround them in the world. It is something that can be applied literally through allowing students to create artwork or music in presentations of projects, but it can also be applied through less obvious ways like inquiry projects where the student gets to decide what is interesting to them and why it is interesting, or science projects through maker spaces where creating anything seems like a real potential. Creativity is something that is best started in elementary education because it creates the basis for the rest of their schooling. If they have had the creativity and innovation suppressed in them at a young age it is much harder to get them to trust that stepping outside of the box or questioning norms will not get them docked marks or ostracized by class and teacher. Some ways to introduce creativity in the classroom in a way that reduces the stress of failure is to use Da Vinci notebooks. (Davis 2018) In her classroom she gave her students notebooks which were not used for giving marks and the students were to use them to draw, to ask questions, or anything they wanted to. This sort of activity tells students there is no wrong way to be creative and they will not be judged for trying or experimenting. Through the notebook students can build their capacity for creativity and it will transfer to classwork. Projects that freely encourage divergent thought and limit the comparison of work and the competition between students.

When we try to measure creativity in students we often have misconceptions and stereotypes of what creativity is. We judge a student's creativity because their behaviour is deemed inappropriate and not appreciated at the time. Just because it seems inappropriate at the time or unappreciated at the time does not mean it lacks value as a creative project. (Starko 2010)

Creativity is measure differently in different cultures. In Western society creativity is seen as a revolution of existing ideas, however in some eastern or traditional cultures creativity is instead “as a process of individual growth, spiritual journey or evolution” (Starko, 2010) When a teacher is stunted in their own creativity it can affect how they measure it in other people. So something we as teachers need to do is to broaden our experiences and try thinking through new alternative experiences.

I believe that the broad role of a teacher is to teach students their role in the world, how the world works, why they are important, and how to approach new information. A lot of my experience in school and receiving new information was highly memorization and test based. I learned to thrive in this environment because creativity was not necessary. If you could write notes and cram before a test then you could manage just fine. Class times were very structured and project time was limited which meant that creativity was never fostered the way that it should have been. We were taught that in projects, if you were going to be creative you had a limited amount of time and then you just had to get a move on to keep up with the others. Creativity should exist in all classrooms and should be a way of teaching and not just something that is introduced in specific projects and then not for others. Creativity fosters freedom, openness and personal growth. It teaches students how to allow themselves the opportunity to try and to think critically of the issues that face them. It keeps students engaged in the classroom and enriches the subject matter and as a result increases their capacity of creativity. It is a vital tool in the classroom if you want students to do more then just exist at school and parrot back information.

## **Bibliography**

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