

# **The Benefits of Fostering Creativity in Schools**

**By: Maegan Moore**

A lot of value is placed on Math and Science in our school systems and in our world. But what about creativity? Many people are aware that exploring creativity in schools is beneficial to students. Many people think that these benefits are more self-actualization than anything else. Exploring creativity will of course improve students' overall happiness, but could it also improve things in greater society? This essay will discuss how fostering creativity in schools can be beneficial to society and to the world. It will discuss how creativity can help children learn how to cope with future challenges, how creativity can lead to innovation, how creativity can and will help students express themselves, and lastly how creativity can help with scientific thinking as well.

Experts know that there is a strong connection between creative expression and overall wellbeing (Lebowitz, 2013). Dr. Carrie Barron, co-author of "The Creativity Cure" suggests something creative might help with an increase in mood after a period of depression (Lebowitz, 2013). Through this we can see that creativity can help us all with our mental health.

Part of teaching creativity in schools is teaching students to be able to effectively cope with future challenges. By teaching students creativity, teachers are teaching important life skills (Priya, 2019). Oftentimes, problems require creative thinking to solve them. Many problems need more of an abstract approach in finding a solution. Skills such as self-reflection, critical thinking, independent thinking, applying theoretical knowledge, etc are all very important life skills which we can learn from creativity-based lessons (Priya, 2019). Other skills learned through creativity include novelty seeking and perseverance. The best thing for kids to learn is *how* to think rather than *what* to think (Priya, 2019). These creative thinking skills can help us with small everyday problems, or with serious issues that hopefully only happen once in a lifetime. Creativity isn't just something that benefits us in art and the like, these skills can be transferred to every aspect of life once kids acquire them.

Another way in which fostering creativity can be beneficial to society and to the world is by fostering innovation and new solutions to wide spread world issues. Many problems that our world is experiencing – homelessness, poverty, climate change – need very creative solutions in order to solve them. The solutions will come from out of the box thinkers. Some examples of these include various forms

of sustainable energy or meat substitutes helping slow climate change (Gray, 2019). Considering harnessing nature's power (sunlight, wind) and using it as our own is obviously an idea that is extremely innovative and, at the time when the idea first came about, evidently had a lot of creative thinking behind it. Meat substitutes could greatly reduce carbon emission, because they mean less meat production. Meat production takes a huge amount of water, in fact one pound of cooked boneless chicken requires 30 liters of water while one pound of Beyond Meat (a plant based substitute) requires only 2 liters of water (Foster, 2013). This is a huge difference for the environment. Animals who are bred in mass amounts like they are in our meat industry produce mass amounts of methane gas, majorly contributing to our climate crisis (timeforchange.org). Some other examples of times that creativity changed the world throughout history include Ford's Model T, which revolutionized the car industry and shifted how we travel from place to place (cnbc.com, 2014). It was the first time the average person was able to own a car. Another example of a big shift is the discovery of penicillin (cnbc.com, 2014). This discovery required the scientific skills that work parallel to creative thinking, as will be discussed later on in this essay. This discovery changed health care forever and the amount of lives it saved is nearly immeasurable. Yet another example of scientific innovation requiring creative thinking is the many advances

in the study of Space made throughout human history (cnbc.com, 2014). Human beings have stepped on the moon thanks to human creativity! Lastly, innovation shook the world with the invention of the world wide web in 1989 (cnbc.com, 2014). Our world would be completely different had it not been for this invention. The way we work, communicate, spend free time, watch television, receive news, even date would be totally different without this original idea.

Fostering creativity also allows kids an outlet to express themselves. One example of this is a group of girls in rural India making small skits about the things their brothers are allowed to do but that they are not allowed to do (Paradkar, 2019). Examples of these things include going out in the evening, wearing whatever he wants, marrying who he wants. In this particular example, these plays are a safe outlet for the girls to express their frustrations. They are also a way to demonstrate their thoughts on the injustice in their lives. This lesson with the girls ended in their teacher encouraging them to talk to their brothers about these things (Paradkar, 2019). These conversations can sometimes bring about positive changes. Creating art about issues in our lives often would prompt questions about what brought about the art in the first place, and in turn start a discussion that hopefully could improve the situation. In this example, these issues in the girls'

lives are representative of a much larger and widespread societal problem. In these cases, we can publish this type of art to make a statement (such as photo projects, producing a play or movie, writing a song). We can even compile art from various people and/or groups that are on the same subject matter to make a statement that way (such as a protest rally).

Another way fostering creativity can help the world is by helping improve other skills, such as science skills (Chakradhar, 2019). Vanessa Ruta is someone profiled by the Scientific American who was a ballet dancer and now explores (through science) how “behavior changes as brain circuits are altered through evolution or experience” (Chakradhar, 2019). Her research involves studying how the nervous system takes in external cues, and how it processes these stimuli to inspire various behaviors (Chakradhar, 2019). She grew up in a very artistic household and studied ballet, but then made the switch to science. She says that creativity still plays a big part in her day to day life and work. She remarks how art and the creative process has many parallels to the scientific process. These processes require the same persistence and discipline.

In conclusion, fostering creativity in our students can bring many benefits to them, to society, and to the world. There are many ways in which this is true, including but not limited to the transferrable nature of creative thinking, giving students an outlet to express themselves, fostering innovation, and fostering problem solving skills for future challenges. Creativity can help us in all school subjects. It can do a world of help for mental health. It can change the world by bringing awareness to and making people care about serious world issues. It can change the world by bringing about new ideas that shift our way of life. It can change our lives individually by equipping us with the tools to sort out problems in our lives. Fostering creativity is one of the most important things we can work on in our school system today and will absolutely be a priority for me moving forward as a teacher.

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