

The Necessity of Creativity

by Joan Freedman



Can you imagine a world without creativity? Impossible! The creative mind has found cures for diseases, created magnificent art, invented countless tools that have made life easier and more comfortable, solved many complex problems facing society, and has brought joy, awe, inspiration and fun into our lives. In fact, just this past year we saw many examples of creative problem solving as the world experienced a pandemic.

Everyone has the potential to have a creative mind – and in our youth, we exude creative expression (drawing on walls, building forts out of blankets). It is only as we age that our innate creativity is suppressed in so many children. Some of this is due to parents who desire for their children a high level of mastery of existing skills over creativity. They make their children “practice until perfect,” wrongly thinking they can program their kids to be creative. But the passion has to come from within. Child prodigies rarely become geniuses who change the world – they only master what already exists. Seeking the approval of parents and teachers, children conform, rather than take risks to be original.

Dr. Robert Bilder, a professor of psychology at UCLA, states that creativity ...flourishes on the edge of chaos; that is where creative changes and big shifts occur. The conditions intersect between the pull for order and unpredictability. So when he asked kids which aspects of the learning environment made them feel more creative, they answered an environment that valued freedom to explore, and an environment that did not simply seek right or wrong answers.

Students are more likely to engage in the creative process in an environment that imposes fewer rules! Now is our chance to change some of the rules for our students. Play and creativity are important catalysts to relieve stress, which we know our children need. They need time and space to be creative. They need to daydream and imagine, to explore and generate ideas. The more ideas that are generated, the better the ideas become. As [Sir Ken Robinson](#) has said, imagination is the root of creativity; it brings to mind things that are not present in our senses. This is what leads to innovation.

Humanity needs creative thinkers and problem solvers. We all have the potential to tap the creativity that is within us. The space, environment and conditions have to be right to foster, not suppress, the creative mind both in the home and at school.

Creativity is a necessity in today's world – let's foster and nurture it in our children! For ideas on how you can incorporate creativity into your lessons, while promoting student learning, email me at joan.freedman@consulting4learning.com.