

IN THE CREATIVE THINKING OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ESSAY

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ABSTRACT

This article is independent of elementary school students and the importance of using essays in the development of creative thinking is highlighted.

It is also based on a person-centered, competent approach on the issues of educating a spiritually mature generation through education mentioned.

Keywords: creative thinking, creative, individual education, upbringing, competencial education, essay writing, elementary class pupils.

The art of creative thinking needs to develop and taught to students because by thinking creativity, students are able to solve the problem they have, the students become more independent, creating reliable and talented human resources, and skillful in the future. Creativity is the most difficult thinking skill to acquire, and also the most sought-after. We value it in our music, entertainment, technology, and other aspects of our existence. We appreciate and yearn for it because it enriches our understanding and can make life easier. Creativity always starts with imagination, and history shows that many things we imagine are later actually created.

When designing learning experiences, teachers can plan and frame curriculum and provide tools that give students options, voice, and choice in order to enable them to be creative. In my work in schools, I've found four things that successful teachers do to develop creativity in their students.

1. Set up learning activities that allow students to explore their creativity in relevant, interesting, and worthwhile ways. Classroom example: Fourth-grade students are presented with a sample of rocks. They are to devise tests to determine what kind of rocks they have based on the definitions they've studied. Students find their own ways to determine differences in hardness, color, and shapes.

Another classroom example: A kindergarten class creates a new illustrated book each week that celebrates a different member of the class or an adult at the school. Each book is full of pages drawn by each student. They have the full liberty of depicting what the person likes and how they perceive him or her.

2. Value creativity and celebrate and reward it. Classroom example: Third-grade students are learning about polygons and to see if they know the concept, the teacher takes them outside and gives each student a sidewalk chalk. Each student is given the task of drawing several examples of polygons on the driveway.

Once the students have accomplished this, the teacher tells the students to transform those shapes into something they love. The students want to show everyone their geometric-based kittens, robots, and dragons and then have an opportunity to explain to the whole class why they liked them.

3. Teach students the other skills they need to be creative. Classroom example: A second-grade class is learning about the concept of freezing. The teacher asks one question to get them started, “Does only water freeze?” The students then design an experiment to determine what other things freeze. The limit is that they can only use what they have in the classroom at the time.

The students come up with a list of things that they will leave outside to see if they freeze: water, juice, vinegar, glue, glass cleaner, toothpaste, and paper. Some suggestions they decide are already solids and shouldn't go outside: pencils, erasers, and books (but somehow paper stays on the test list). The next day, they discuss their findings and have engaging conversations about why the paper is stiff and the vinegar has not frozen.

The initial discussion among students about what might freeze fosters skills such as advocating for one's ideas and compromising. The follow-up discussion encourages deductive reasoning and active listening.

4. Remove constraints for creativity and give the students space and a framework in which they can be creative. Classroom example: A sixth-grade class produces Halloween costume plays. In order to wear costumes to school, the students have to write a play that incorporates each of their characters into a plot and then present the play. For instance, they have to come up with how a giant soda can and the superhero Wonder Woman will interact. The students love the challenge.

Creativity is the ability to make or do something new that is also useful or valued by others (Gardner, 1993). The “something” can be an object (like an essay or painting), a skill (like playing an instrument), or an action (like using a familiar tool

in a new way). To be creative, the object, skill, or action cannot simply be bizarre or strange; it cannot be new without also being useful or valued, and not simply be the result of accident. If a person types letters at random that form a poem by chance, the result may be beautiful, but it would not be creative by the definition above. Viewed this way, creativity includes a wide range of human experience that many people, if not everyone, have had at some time or other (Kaufman & Baer, 2006). The experience is not restricted to a few geniuses, nor exclusive to specific fields or activities like art or the composing of music.

Especially important for teachers are two facts. The first is that an important form of creativity is creative thinking, the generation of ideas that are new as well as useful, productive, and appropriate. The second is that creative thinking can be stimulated by teachers' efforts. Teachers can, for example, encourage students' divergent thinking—ideas that are open-ended and that lead in many directions (Torrance, 1992; Kim, 2006). Divergent thinking is stimulated by open-ended questions—questions with many possible answers, such as the following:

How many uses can you think of for a cup?

Draw a picture that somehow incorporates all of these words: cat, fire engine, and banana.

What is the most unusual use you can think of for a shoe?

Note that answering these questions creatively depends partly on having already acquired knowledge about the objects to which the questions refer. In this sense divergent thinking depends partly on its converse, convergent thinking, which is focused, logical reasoning about ideas and experiences that lead to specific answers. Up to a point, then, developing students' convergent thinking—as schoolwork often does by emphasizing mastery of content—facilitates students' divergent thinking indirectly, and hence also their creativity (Sternberg, 2003; Runco, 2004; Cropley, 2006). But carried to extremes, excessive emphasis on convergent thinking may discourage creativity.

Whether in school or out, creativity seems to flourish best when the creative activity is its own intrinsic reward, and a person is relatively unconcerned with what others think of the results. Whatever the activity—composing a song, writing an essay, organizing a party, or whatever—it is more likely to be creative if the creator focuses on and enjoys the activity in itself, and thinks relatively little about how others may evaluate the activity (Brophy, 2004). Unfortunately, encouraging students to ignore others' responses can sometimes pose a challenge for teachers. Not only is

it the teachers' job to evaluate students' learning of particular ideas or skills, but also they have to do so within restricted time limits of a course or a school year. In spite of these constraints, though, creativity still can be encouraged in classrooms at least some of the time (Claxton, Edwards, & Scale-Constantinou, 2006). Suppose, for example, that students have to be assessed on their understanding and use of particular vocabulary. Testing their understanding may limit creative thinking; students will understandably focus their energies on learning "right" answers for the tests. But assessment does not have to happen constantly. There can also be times to encourage experimentation with vocabulary through writing poems, making word games, or in other thought-provoking ways. These activities are all potentially creative. To some extent, therefore, learning content and experimenting or playing with content can both find a place—in fact one of these activities can often support the other.

Providing adequate time for students to write is one essential element of an effective writing instruction program. However, recent surveys of elementary teachers indicate that students spend little time writing during the school day. Students need dedicated instructional time to learn the skills and strategies necessary to become effective writers, as well as time to practice what they learn. Time for writing practice can help students gain confidence in their writing abilities. As teachers observe the way students write, they can identify difficulties and assist students with learning and applying the writing process.

Few skills are as critical to educational success as essay writing for elementary students, and kids can get a leg up on their craft by exercising their skills in a variety of ways. Learning the basics through simple practices ensures that children understand what makes an essay effective and successful, and prepares them for further development in high school, college and beyond.

Critical thinking is essential for long-term success in any field, especially writing. Teachers can help students develop this skill by hosting a question-and-answer period after students have read a book or written an essay and read it aloud to the class. Promoting confidence in the writer is also crucial. The questions students ask advance critical thinking about point of view, comprehension and analysis, which strengthen the author's abilities for every type of essay, including expository, narrative and comparative.

Repeating format and structure exercise rules for writing multiple times may cause students to lose interest. To rouse interest, incorporate the full spectrum of

essay styles, narrative, persuasive, comparative and expository in assignments. Writing in each format helps students solidify their understanding.

Enforcing rules and standards is extremely helpful for unmotivated writers struggling to complete open-ended assignments. Providing examples and requiring outlines for every written project focuses efforts and clarifies expectations. It also streamlines the process of writing and breaks it down into manageable sections. Once kids realize that writing is as much about organization as it is inspiration, they swiftly begin honing their technique.

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