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Celebrate Creativity

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAGC CREATIVITY NETWORK

View from the Chair

I'm sitting here in my same old office chair, but the view has changed since I last wrote from my perch in Colorado. Now I am looking out across the Green Mountains of Vermont, after driving across the country with my two dogs in late November to start a new job as a middle school art teacher. After teaching in an independent, specialized school for gifted learners for many years, adapting to this public school population of mixed ability, mixed socio-economic and mixed-up middle-schoolers, has been an interesting study in comparison and contrast. I moved from a "blue" state, where gifted education is mandated, to a "red" state where it is not (see the map on the Davidson Institute web page: <http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/StatePolicy.aspx> .) There is no identification or services for gifted learners in my Vermont school, but thanks to the comprehensive education I received from my former students in Colorado, I can spot them. They are the ones building scale models of the Golden Gate Bridge, staying after school to work on oil paintings, and bringing in references from home to use while crafting a series of clay dinosaurs. Most of my students are average middle school kids - kids who may struggle to know what to do when the assignment is to design their own project. But the gifted students know just what to do, and they do not waste any time getting to it. In a school where no formal services exist for gifted learners, access to creative freedom, even if just 43 minutes a day for one quarter of the school year, is an unprecedented and much needed opportunity.

I have been examining my new view for only a month or two, but it is clear enough that creative freedom is essential for gifted youth. Sir Ken Robinson, in his 2006 TED talk (http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html) states: "Creativity is as important as literacy." Robinson believes we do not grow *into* creativity; we grow *out* of it, in part because the focus of our schools is misguided. By challenging provincial school protocol and seeking ways to provide more student-directed learning, we can usher in a new era and champion creativity for our bright young twenty-first century learners.

~Nan Hathaway
NAGC Creativity Network Chair

Nan Hathaway is an art educator and gifted education specialist, currently teaching art at Crossett Brook Middle School in Duxbury, Vermont. Nan holds a Master's degree in Gifted Education and was named Colorado Independent-School Art Educator of the Year (2008). She serves on the Board of Directors for the Teaching for Artistic Behavior Partnership and is the author of several articles about creativity and art education.



An Interview with Bonnie Cramond, 23rd Recipient of the E. Paul Torrance Award

by Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers

Bonnie Cramond, named the E. Paul Torrance Award winner by the members of the Creativity Network in November 2009, is a Professor of Gifted and Creative Education in the Department of Educational Psychology and Instructional Technology at the University of Georgia. A dedicated scholar, Bonnie has been recognized internationally for her contributions to gifted, talented and creative education.

What led you to an interest in gifted and creative education?

I was teaching 5th grade in a public school in a New Orleans suburb. One year I had an extraordinarily creative class. They did all kinds of exciting things that year that got our class attention. For example, one thing that they did was to create a school competition for records (like the Guinness Book of Records categories, but suited to children), held the competitions, tallied the results, compiled them, wrote the book and had it "published." I have to confess that most of the activities were NOT my idea; they came from the students. However, I now realize that I empowered and enabled them. But, their activities brought me to the attention of the school district administration, and they asked me to teach the gifted students. So, that summer I took a graduate class in gifted education, read about Paul Torrance, and I decided that I wanted to study with him.

What part of your work brings you the most joy?

It doesn't sound very professional, I suppose, but I think the people still bring me the most lasting joy--colleagues, students, and children. On a very individual, personal level, I still enjoy the high of a new idea or a new venture. For example, I am beginning work with the Tibetan Children's Village Schools to work on their gifted program. That brings me joy.



The E. Paul Torrance Award was presented to Dr. Bonnie Cramond by her former student Dr. Kyung Hee Kim & Creativity Network Chair Nan Hathaway at the 2009 Annual Convention in St. Louis, Missouri.

What do you see as the most pressing issues regarding nurturing creative abilities in children?

I think that our nation has gone the wrong way in trying to improve education. Our strength has been our innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. But, we are killing that with drill and test classrooms. We have a drop out problem; I suspect that it will get worse as we make the curriculum more stultifying. Educators think that struggling students, students from poverty, need more drill. I think these children need more emphasis on higher level thinking, especially creativity. I don't understand why we want to do more of what hasn't worked already. If we want children to learn in school, they must be engaged. We engage them by interesting them. This is not a new idea, I know, but I see us moving away from it.

What would you like to see happen in the future to grow the influence of the field of gifted, talented and creative education?

I would like us to have more of a voice in general education. The field is still seen by others as a fringe group, an exclusive group. I don't believe that all students are gifted, but I believe that all students have relative strengths and interests that can be developed through education. I believe that all students can further develop their intelligence and creativity. However, I don't know how we can do this other than to get involved in grass roots educational policy and electing responsive politicians. Are there any?

What advice would you give educators who wish to ignite their creativity and/or promote creative behavior in others?

To ignite your own creativity, I would say get involved in things that invoke your passion, and then your enthusiasm will be infectious. This semester I am taking two classes: Zen Drawing and Structural Equation Modeling. At first I joked that I was exercising my right brain and left brain separately. However, the joy of learning and creativity is similar in both. But taking classes is not the only or even necessarily the best way to ignite creativity. We all need to do what works for us. Some people's creativity is ignited by being in nature, for others it is being around other creative people, for still others it is meditation, or exercise. We all have to think about what makes us feel creative and do that.

As far as promoting creative behavior in others--of course that depends on the situation. In a classroom, I think it means attending to the 4Ps -- recognizing creative behavior in individuals and encouraging it; creating a psychologically safe environment that allows for both stimulation and quiet reflection; teaching students how to use creative processes; and providing opportunities for creative products. Also, we should be models of creative thought--open to ideas and flexible. When problems arise, we should approach them creatively when possible.

Susan Keller-Mathers is an Assistant Professor and graduate faculty member at the International Center for Studies in Creativity, Buffalo, NY where she teaches in the Master of Science in Creativity program. She is the Curriculum chair for the School of Professionals at Buffalo State College, serves as a board member for the American Creativity Association and E. Paul Torrance Award Chair for the Creativity Network of the National Association of Gifted Children.

Marching to the Beat of a Different Drummer The Creative Underachiever

by Dr. Sylvia B. Rimm

Underachieving children are not always creative, and creative children are not always underachievers. However, an alarming number of highly creative children do not achieve to their abilities in school. Parents of those highly creative children frequently conclude with a certain amount of pride that "their child has always seemed to march to the beat of a different drummer."

Both creative achievers and underachievers have been given early messages about the importance of creativity by at least one parent. The messages come most simply from the praise given to them for their creative products and actions. They learn that when they do something unusual, or if they have a funny or different idea, it brings attention. Creative thinking becomes a personal motivational goal, which won't necessarily lead to underachievement if home and school environments cooperate to foster the creative process.

An early indicator of a potential problem will appear in the differential valuing of the child's creativity by two parents. The child that identifies with the creative parent is likely to be creative; but if the other parent doesn't value creativity, the seeds of opposition and underachievement may be planted.

At elementary level creative children may be seen as achievers, although the telltale signs of creative opposition are usually already visible. They often voice complaints about boring reading workbooks and teachers that don't like them, and parents may ally with them against the teacher, or ask for less busywork or request deadline extension for assignments. Parent conversations with other adults that take place within children's hearing (referential speaking) about the lack of creativity in schools, the inadequacy of teachers, or the invidious comparison of routine schoolwork with the more creative out-of-school activities in sports, drama, or music, will add to the opposition problem.

As the parent sides with the child against the school, the child learns to avoid school responsibility and to blame the boring school curriculum for his/her problems. In the powerful alliance of child and parent, the child gains too much power and becomes engaged in a subtle struggle with his/her teacher in the name of creativity. Within this struggle are the seeds of the pattern of determined and oppositional nonconformity. The child has begun his/her march to the beat of an ever different drummer.

Creative young people are faced with paradoxical pressures. Their internalized value system says to "be creative." They translate that to mean "don't ever conform." However, achievement requires some conformity. Peers are also demanding their conformity for acceptance. Conforming to friends seems antithetical to their wishes to be creative. During the preadolescent years, creative underachievers are typically unhappy, often unappreciated by parents, teachers, and peers alike.

By senior high school, opposition is firmly entrenched and is a way of life. The opposition that began as an alliance between a parent and a teacher has expanded to become opposition against one or both parents and any number of teachers. Sometimes, the adolescent will be successful in getting Mom on his/her side against Dad, or vice versa. Either or both parents may share in their protest against the school. The most likely alliance group of all, however, will be an oppositional peer group, preferably one that identifies itself as "different." The creative underachiever has finally found acceptance by friends who value, most of all, nonconformity and opposition.

Dr. Sylvia Rimm is a psychologist, director of Family Achievement Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, and is a clinical professor at Case Western Reserve School of Medicine. Dr. Rimm's nine years as a contributing correspondent to NBC's Today Show and as a favorite personality on public radio make her a familiar child psychologist to many audiences. She has authored many books including *How to Parent So Children Will Learn* and *Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades*, both 2008 National Best Books award winners from USA Book News. In her nationally syndicated parenting column, Dr. Rimm answers hundreds of letters each year from parents and grandparents. She speaks and publishes internationally on family and school approaches to guiding children toward achievement, parenting, and the lives of teenagers.

Marching to the Beat Continued...

What Parents and Teachers Can Do to Help Creative Underachievers

Ideal home and school environments that foster both creativity and achievement include parents and teachers that value creativity within the limits of reasonable conformity. That is, children are praised and encouraged in unusual and critical thinking and production, but this difference does not become a device or a manipulation for avoidance of academic or home responsibility. If in any way creativity takes on a ritualized position of avoiding a parent's requirements or the school's expectations, then creativity will be used as "a way out" of achievement. Here are some recommendations for parents and teachers for the prevention and/or cure of underachievement in creative children:

- *A parent should not, if at all possible, ally with a child against a teacher in the name of creativity.* Parents should communicate their concerns to teachers, but it must be done carefully so the teachers or school are not "put down" in the process, and the child doesn't view this as an excuse for not fulfilling school expectations.
- *One parent shouldn't ally with a child against another parent in the name of creativity* or permit the child's creative needs to be the excuse for not doing what the other parent requests. This may cause the child to become rebellious with creativity as his/her excuse.
- *Encourage creative children to be productive in at least one area of creative expression, and help them to find an audience for their performances.* Children that are happily and productively involved in creative arenas are less likely to be using their energy to fight authority. Whether their choice of creative expression is art, drama, music, or science, a creative outlet frees them of some of their internalized pressure to be nonconformists in other areas. Be sure, however, not to permit them to use that creative outlet as a means of evading academic assignments.
- *Don't label one child in the family "the creative child."* It causes that child to feel pressured to be most creative all the time and causes other siblings to believe that creativity is not possible for them at all.
- *Find appropriate models and mentors in areas of children's creativity.* Creative children, particularly in adolescence, too easily discover inappropriate models that may also be creative underachievers. Appropriate models should share their creative talent area, but must also give the message of self-discipline and reasonable conformity, which the underachievers have not developed. The model should be an achieving, creative person.
- *Find a peer environment that combines creativity and achievement* so that creative children may feel comfortably accepted by other achieving and creative young people. Gifted resource programs frequently provide a haven for creative underachievers provided the identification process has not eliminated them from participation. There are many summer opportunities for drama, music, art, photography, computers, science, math, or foreign languages that provide excellent creative outlets.
- *Encourage intrinsic motivation while also teaching competition.* Children should learn to enjoy the creative process for the joy and satisfaction of their personal involvement. However, they should not be permitted to entirely avoid the competitive arena. They should experience a balance of winning and losing to build confidence.
- *Use creative strengths to build up weaknesses.* Children don't have to be equally strong in all areas, but they do have to accomplish at least minimally in school-required subjects so that they don't close educational doors for themselves. Creative children will often find their own solutions to dealing with their weaknesses, and some flexibility and encouragement on the part of teachers will foster creative solutions.
- *Avoid confrontations, particularly if you can't control the outcomes.* This is not an excuse to avoid firmness and reasonable consequences, but it is a warning to prevent overreaction, overpunishment, and the continuous struggles and battles that often plague the creative adolescent's environment. Modeling and sharing positive work and play experiences are more effective than lectures and threats.
- *Help creative adolescents to plan a creative future.* Though they are underachievers at this time, it's most critical that they understand that most creative careers are open only to achievers. If they're unwilling to compromise and

Book Reviews

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days
by Jeff Kinney
(Abrams, 2009)

It's summer vacation, and Greg Heffley is determined to have the adventure of a lifetime. He loves playing video games and can't understand why his mother wants him to play outside. Greg enjoys summer break because he can sleep in late, swim, and play games. So when his mother starts a reading club for the neighborhood boys, Greg wants to barf. Who wants to read classics when you can read comics instead? Greg and his best friend, Rowley, decide to raise money with a lawn service business, only to discover that mowing lawns is more difficult than it looks. Then Greg has the opportunity to visit the local country club with Rowley's family. It is a fun experience until the bill for the boys' fruit smoothies arrives in the mail. Greg's summer continues to head downhill when a family trip to Slipslide Water Park is a complete bust. But things start to look up when Greg spends a week at the beach with Rowley's family. Young readers will enjoy the fourth installment of this popular series which is filled with humor and fun illustrations. Jeff Kinney captures the angst of the middle school years with creativity and charm, enchanting readers of all ages.

by Suzanna E. Henson, Ph.D.

Hate That Cat
by Sharon Creech
(Harpercollins, 2008)

Hate That Cat is a wonderful sequel to Sharon Creech's poetic novel, Love That Dog. Jack continues to find his voice in poetry, struggling to understand complicated terms like onomatopoeia, alliteration, and assonance. He gravitates toward the work of Walter Dean Myers and William Carlos Williams; Jack uses the poetry of these writers as a springboard toward his own creativity. This novel is particularly innovative because it is written in a series of poems. Readers can fall into the narration of Jack, who writes to his teacher, Miss Stretchberry. While Jack is resistant to poetry at first, he gradually comes to enjoy self-expression. Great poems are a wonderful inspiration, but eventually Jack must find his own voice. By the end of this delightful story, Jack reaps a harvest of words, creating rhythm and rhyme in a memorable way. This series is particularly meaningful because it stars an unlikely poet, Jack, in the central role. He discovers his "inner poet" while completing required assignments. Young readers will enjoy this poetic series in which a boy discovers his voice and finds his place in the world of words.

Suzanna E. Henson finished a Ph.D. at William & Mary in 2005 and teaches full-time at Florida Gulf Coast University.

The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom
by Margarita Engle
(Henry Holt, 2008)

Is it possible to capture Cuba's struggle for freedom within poetry? Margarita Engle's Newbery Honor book, *The Surrender Tree*, is a tribute to Cuba's three wars of independence during the 1800s. Readers will fall into the poetry from the very first lines told by a young girl named Rosa who is based upon a historical figure. In her award winning collection, Engle focuses on three specific eras in Cuban history which take place between 1850-1900. The poems are lyrical and historical at the same time, drawing readers into the pageantry of the 19th century landscape - from the Spanish soldiers to the nurses to the villagers to the children of war. Rosa's story flows through the book, connecting the poem to a central narrative: she cares for the sick and wounded with plants as a young girl. As a young woman, Rosa hides in caves and nurses soldiers from both sides of the political spectrum. Yet Rosa struggles to heal the hatred and fear that war brings. Gradually she learns that war is a complicated, unruly force that shatters lives and creates division between people. This poetry collection will inspire young poets and historians simultaneously; Margarita Engle's collection is a wonderful addition to any library.

The Hypocrisy of Teaching Creativity

by Julia C. Johnson

Readers beware! The following article may be considered a cynical rant based upon controversial ideology and opinionated theory. It is warranted on this premise: one must concede that the essence of creativity itself is often derived from inquisitive opposition, inclusive of autonomous thought processes, and through this philosophical train of thought, the definition of creativity and rebellion are ironically juxtaposed.

Adulthood molds us to believe that not all outlets of creativity are created equal in the world of responsibility. While we demand imaginative attributes for success in the fields of architecture, engineering, journalism and photography, the label of creativity comes burdened with the stigma of an image inclusive of an eclectic artist living in the East Village with a bizarre haircut and abstract art strewn on the walls.

One struggles to earn the right to wear the hat of creativity while still being respected as a responsible, stable, professional. This is not true of all professions. The ubiquitous acceptance of creative people is founded in the arts. When hiring a painter to design a mural, one is inclined to look for evidence of creativity in unusual fashion choices similar to how an executive looks for projected professionalism in formal attire when interviewing a prospective new employee.

Imagination is not an attribute that one would use to describe a reputable accountant, or a heart surgeon. In certain professions, one is more inclined to be impressed by other characteristics, like integrity, responsibility, accuracy, and so on. Where does the field of education fall in this distinction? At a glimpse, one would claim that it is imperative for an effective teacher to embody inventive qualities. However, does the realm of education really lend itself to creative tendencies?

One of the many benefits of teaching gifted and talented is the freedom one has to explore. Exploration is the breeding ground for creativity. While a teacher can have prepared an engaging lesson that aims to 'teach' creative problem solving, the true creative elements begin to emerge when the classroom teacher grants permission to abandon protocol, ignore benchmarks and let the students drive the curriculum.

The challenge that educators face today is how to teach students that creativity is valued while standing in the role of hypocrisy. Truth be told, the regulations and mandates of education do not reflect any regard for creativity. Without guiding us into murky political waters, the pendulum of pedagogy is swinging fiercely to the direction of restrictions. It would not be unfounded or irrational to fear that soon the curriculum could be implemented through identical strategies statewide. It is plausible that in the near future, every 5th grade classroom in New York State would be reading from the same script on the same day and perhaps even at the same time.

To further illustrate the pretense of our standards, while educators have studied the foundation of differentiating instruction, multiple intelligences and learning styles, the lip service is exposed when state mandated curriculum seems to be appropriately designed for effective implementation provided through robots of some sort.

The profession of teaching has earned critical acclaim for creativity, and yet professional development, articles, books, and courses aim to sanctimoniously communicate pre-packaged teaching strategies. Ironically, this approach promises to somehow not only teach teachers how to be creative, but also includes pre-packaged lessons which promote creativity with the same effectiveness of reading a book about jogging in the hopes that one will lose weight.

Our professional discourse reflects that creativity is to be cultivated and praised, while our colloquialisms include idioms such as 'don't re-invent the wheel' and 'keep it simple stupid'. One is quietly requested to refrain from going overboard with creative teaching strategies.

Our lesson plans are theoretically evaluated based upon creativity, and yet we are often provided with cookie cutter templates which outline what should be said and done with quotation marks and numbered lines.

Blooms taxonomy lends adjectives for higher order thinking skills, and yet as we venture to have students 'create', 'explore' and 'evaluate', we are not permitted the time to interject uniquely generated lessons until our state mandated curriculum is 'covered', whatever that means. (continued p. 7)



Creativity is all about making choices and the results should reflect the 'voice' or individuality of the students.

By Bruce Hammonds

The Hypocrisy of Teaching Creativity Continued...

In addition to these confines, teachers are provided with pathetic budgets (if any) for supplies, and risk taking (an integral component of creativity) demands more courage than ever before in a world that is sue-happy and liability driven. New teachers, who bring with them the highest potential for creativity with a bag of tricks chockfull of enthusiasm and energy, are most at odds with fear that threatens to choke every last trace of risk taking behavior with horrifying words like 'untenured' silently looming over every decision to be made which involves thinking outside of the box.

Once more the hypocrisy is so thick you can barely cut through it to let an ounce of creativity seep through. Be creative, but don't do anything that ventures from the norm without fear that you are in breach of some unspoken rule; Differentiate instruction, but there is no funding for unique manipulatives. This realm cultivates stagnant procedures and yet somehow our students are expected to believe that creativity is an attribute to be prized when we are simply not practicing what we ultimately aim to preach.

The rigidity of resources, protocol, curriculum, testing, restrictions of subject matter and standards make a mockery of the notion of creativity in the classroom.

Herein lies the paradox of this testimony; It would be an error to surmise that this rhetoric denotes that there is a lack of creativity in the classroom. Quite the contrary, this is a testament to the cleverness that educators exemplify. Despite all of the odds stacked against them, educators have

exemplified creativity by not succumbing to the overwhelming pull of the tides which ebb away from the shore of ingenuity.

There are multiple obvious ways that educators strive to generate creativity and inspire creative students. It is essential to create a milieu conducive to students feeling safe to explore, an environment which is safe to share all thoughts, take risks, make mistakes and learn through various means. A feng-shui, print-rich environment can be artistically decorated to invoke and inspire.

The less apparent daily demonstration of teacher ingenuity is the more impressive testimony. When bound by the curriculum, teachers integrate creative components in every possible nook and cranny. When budgets do not lend themselves to purchasing necessary materials, every teacher becomes a MacGyver, inventing new ways to create what is needed. Wherever creativity is potentially stifled, teachers reignite the flame! Finding ways to navigate through the vines of confinement which make up the dense jungle of restrictions in education embodies the ways in which teachers daily exhibit the essence of creativity.

Thus the web of creativity is a more tangled than ever before in the educational universe. The resourceful genes of a teacher are a rare strain of the trait, incorporating resilience, and ingenuity of a higher level. Throw this into the educational mixing bowl of ever increasing roles, responsibilities, challenges and changes and one is forced to ask the question: is there anything that a teacher cannot do?!

Julia C. Johnson coordinates the G&T program for the Islip School District. She holds a Bachelor's degree in English & a Master's in Education, as well as New York state Gifted & Talented certification. She is a dedicated supporter of creatively infusing curriculum with essential components of Social Emotional Learning, Nature Education and Technology. She has been requested to lecture on the topics of Connecting Kids with Nature and Technology Integration in addition to working as an educational consultant.

NAGC Creativity Network E. Paul Torrance Award Call For Nominations

The purpose of the E. Paul Torrance Award is to acknowledge and reward significant contributions of individuals and groups whose work facilitates the enhancement and spread of creativity, especially among gifted children, and who are themselves creative thinkers. The award carries the name of the man who probably more than any other individual has promoted the values and behavior the Creativity Network wishes to honor.

Contact Information

Please contact Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers, International Center for Studies in Creativity at kellersm@buffalostate.edu or call 716-878-4070 with any questions.

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**THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL WAS PRESENTED AT
CREATIVITY NIGHT AT THE 2009 NAGC CONVENTION
IN ST. LOUIS, MO**

CRITERIA CANDY

FPS/Curricular Connection:

To learn how to write criteria and how to use a criteria grid

Intended Audience: All levels (Beginners)

Materials:

- Five packets of cookies or small chocolate (candy) bars or health bars
- One scenario card (provided) for each group
- One blank criteria grid for each group
- List of possible criteria (See list below.)

Suggested Time: 45 minutes

Procedures:

- Before you start, count how many bars/cookies are in each pack and how much each pack costs and write this on the whiteboard. Keep the packets on hand so that the students can read the labels and look at the packaging if they need to.

Share out the candy so that each group has at least one of each type.

Ask the students to think about how they would choose the 'best' brand of candy.

List their brainstormed ideas on the whiteboard, writing them as criteria (question form).

If they miss any of the following, add them to the list:

Which one

- Is most chewy?
- Is longest lasting?
- Is sweetest?
- Has the most appealing name?
- Has the smoothest texture?
- Is best value for money?
- Is crunchiest?
- Is the most nutritious?
- Has the most appealing wrapping?
- Is the softest?

Choose five criteria and demonstrate to the students how to fill out a criteria grid.

Give each group a different scenario card and a set of candy.

Ask them to develop criteria to help them choose the best candy to fit their scenario.

They can choose criteria from the list or write their own.

Ask each group to complete the criteria grid.

When they have finished, discuss the candy each group chose and explore how the different criteria impacted on their selection of the best one.

(See other pages for sample criteria grid and scenarios.)

**FUTURE PROBLEM
SOLVING
PROGRAM
INTERNATIONAL**
Teaching Students
How to Think

Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPi) was designed by Dr. E. Paul Torrance in 1974 to encourage creativity and increase students' interest in the future. Since that time, FPS has grown and now offers various enrichment opportunities: Global Issues Problem Solving, Community Problem Solving, Scenario Writing, and Action-based Problem Solving. Each FPS component provides learning opportunities and competitions for high-achieving students utilizing the creative problem solving process.

All FPS components provide activities to encourage creative thinking and critical thinking as students develop their skills of communication, of leadership and collaboration and academic excellence. Creative problem solving allows gifted students the opportunity to express ideas and opinions about the future while learning how to become active participants in shaping the future. It is important that students learn how to overcome obstacles or barriers in confronting challenges and developing solution ideas into full action plans addressing social, political, scientific, economic, and technological issues.

Visit the website (www.fpspi.org) to obtain full descriptions of each component and find the affiliate programs available.

-Marianne Solomon, Executive Director of Future Problem Solving, Inc.

Scenarios for Criteria Ranking with candy:

<p>You are organizing a birthday party for an eight-year-old boy.</p>	<p>Your Grandma is having some of her elderly friends over to her house.</p>
<p>You are organizing a school camp for 11 – 13 year olds. (Substitute the appropriate year range for the group of students doing this exercise.)</p>	<p>Your son is living away from home at University and you are sending him a 'snack pack'.</p>
<p>You are going on a tramping holiday in the bush. (woods)</p>	<p>You are going to visit Harry Potter at Hogwarts</p>
<p>You are packing lunch for your Dad who works at an archaeological dig in the desert.</p>	<p>You are choosing one brand to stock in a small store you are opening.</p>

Criteria Grid - Choosing the best candy!!

Write your five criteria across the five columns: Which candy is ...

List the name of each candy						Row Totals

- In the left hand column note names of the five bars.
- Look at the first criterion and decide which bar/candy best fits it. Give this bar a score of 5.
- Decide which bar/candy least fits the criterion and give this a 1.
- Rank the other 4 bars/candies.
- Repeat for all of the criteria.
- Each column should have 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- Add the rows across and the highest scoring one would be the best one for you to choose.
- Enjoy the candy!

Extension:

Get students to make up their own scenarios (not necessarily using food) and try them out with other students.

Comments:

This activity works extremely well with cookies and bars and the students will never forget how to do a grid!! However, some people feel uncomfortable using chocolates or cookies or it goes against a school's healthy eating policy. If this is the case you can use health food bars or even fresh or dried fruit and vegetable snacks – or even types of pizza. You may need to alter the scenarios. Otherwise you can use picture books (even with Seniors), and the scenarios could be that – you are choosing the winners of....the best illustrated book, the best cover, the most exciting story, the best book for an eight-year-old, the best book to read aloud, etc.

Have We Scheduled Creativity Out of Schools?

by Nan Hathaway

Systematic Sabotage

Can it be expected that students reach a state of “flow” (Csikszentmihayl, 1996) in the few minutes afforded them, after the transition into class, after the introduction and “motivational set,” after the exemplar is displayed and discussed, after the materials are handed out and *before* it is time to line up? In a typical art, music, science or math class, this leaves approximately 20 minutes for “flow” to occur. Gifted students are capable enough to recognize that it might not really be “worth it” to fully engage in a creative endeavor, knowing that the experience is almost over before it begins.

Having Time

Just as grade-skipping may be the simplest, most effective means for accommodating the needs of many academically gifted learners (Colangelo, Assouline & Gross, 2004), block scheduling might be the most ready answer for unlocking creativity. This point was driven home recently when I sat down with my students in a studio-art environment, to make some art. I considered various materials and techniques, assembled needed tools and supplies, selected an idea from several that I was considering, set up my work space, and began. It was then time to clean up. The frustration I felt was enormous. The next time I considered modeling artistic behavior for my students, I remembered the feeling of being jarred from a creative state of mind in order to transition to the next class. As a result, I compromised my intentions and settled for a project which demanded less investment. This experience caused me to see things more clearly - from my students’ point of view. Creative production takes time. It also takes inspiration, incubation, motivation, “a good imagination and a pile of junk” (quote attributed to Thomas Edison). Are our school schedules set up to support meaningful creative work?

Supporting Creativity

As champions for gifted children, we need to be vigilant and proactive to protect and promote creative possibility in our school settings. Teachers and administrators should proactively seek ways for students to direct their own learning, follow their passions, pursue idiosyncratic interests and adapt learning to fit their unique process. Simply by asking “what if?” and “what next?” teachers can support and extend learning, facilitating imaginative, original work in all areas of our students’ day. The following list is one I refer to often:

Frequently Asked Questions

What can I do to enhance creativity in my classroom?

- Provide a private place for creative work to be done.
- Provide materials (e.g. musical instruments, sketch books, scientific instruments).
- Encourage self-expression and display the students’ creative work.
- Create a creative atmosphere with good music, books, and pictures.
- Do your own creative work.
- Value the unusual, the divergent, and the creative work of others.
- Provide special classes.
- Emphasize that talent is only a small part of creative production and that discipline and practice are important.
- Get creativity training.
- Reduce anxiety in classroom, especially that created by the teachers.
- Nurture individuation and differences within the class.
- Provide situations that present incompleteness and openness.
- Allow and encourage lots of questions.
- Emphasize self-initiated exploring, observing, questioning, feeling, classifying, recording, translating, inferring, testing inferences, and communication.
- Help the student learn by mistakes.

- Reinforce creativity, but do not place too high a reward on it, as this makes creative behavior “high stakes” and increases anxiety.
- Give opportunities to investigate ideas of successful, eminent people who used the creative process.

What are some blocks to creativity?

- Expectation of judging and evaluating.
- Constantly being watched or observed while working on a creative project.
- Creating a competitive atmosphere.
- Conforming to others’ expectations.
- Anxiety.
- Perfectionism.
- Reward systems.
- Authoritarianism.
- External locus of control.
- Trying to be creative.
- Requiring the one right answer.

(Colorado Department of Education. *Gifted Education Guidelines and Resources, Volume II*, p 60)

The most interesting thing I notice now when I read through the list is what a good match student-differentiated learning is for the first list (*What can I do to enhance creativity in my classroom?*), and how teacher-directed learning often results in the pitfalls of the second list (*what are some blocks to creativity?*) This suggests that when teachers assume the role of *facilitator* instead of *director* of learning, creativity is enhanced.

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Creativity and Gifted Education

Seeing the Forest and the Trees

by Alicia Arnold

There are three views when it comes to the concept of creativity: A) creativity is a domain general skill that can be taught universally and transferred to many subject matters B) creativity is a domain specific skill and must be taught within an explicit content area and C) creativity is synthesized skill that can be taught using a combination of domain general and domain specific approaches.

Why does the concept of creativity matter? As parents and educators, our concept of creativity shapes educational policy and teaching methods. Torrance (1998) stated, “Gifted and talented children are an awesomely powerful force. They can advance civilization or destroy it. The creative energies of gifted and talented children need to be activated and guided early, or else they will be lost – or prove dangerous” (p. 17). This paper proposes a synthesized view of creativity is the best path for supporting the creative potential of gifted children.

Domain Generality of Creativity

Evidence to support the domain generality of creativity is derived from self-rated or teacher-ratings of a student’s divergent thinking ability based on assessments such as, the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), which measures divergent thinking and problem solving skills on the dimensions of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration (Cramond, Matthews-Morgan, Bandalos & Zuo, 2005). Torrance (1981) found TTCT scores in elementary school were able to predict subsequent creative achievement as adults. Plucker (1999) analyzed the predictive validity of Torrance’s longitudinal study and confirmed the findings. Additional evidence for domain generality is provided by Feist (1998) and Conti, Coon and Amabile (1996).
Domain Specificity of Creativity

Evidence to support the domain specificity of creativity is based on Gardner’s multiple intelligences (MI). With MI, Gardner proposed a broader view of intelligence including linguistic, logical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and later naturalistic intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Through research, Gardner found creativity in one domain was not a predictor of creativity in a different domain. Further support for domain specificity was provided by Han and Marvin (2002) and Chen, Himsel, Kasof, Greenberger and Dmitrieva (2006). These studies confirmed low correlations among ratings of creative performance in different domains.

Supporting a Synthesized View of Creativity

Both sides of the domain debate have their weaknesses. The limitation of the domain general view of creativity relates to response-bias of self-report indices of creativity, the explanatory power of divergent thinking tests, and lack of research in exploring correlations outside of divergent thinking. On the other hand, the limitation of the domain specific view of creativity points to a lack of empirical support for

Gardner’s MI and the absence of valid and reliable evidence to support domain-specificity (Chen et al, 2006).

The disagreement on how to conceptualize creativity is particularly poignant in gifted education. Baer and Kaufman (2005) wrote, “Finding the right conceptualization of creativity matters in gifted education because developing students’ potential as creative thinkers is (or should be) one of the most important goals of education” (p. 159). To bridge the gap between the opposing theories of creativity, Baer and Kaufman (2005) put forth the Amusement Park Theoretical (APT) model of creativity. Using the APT model, academic learning and creativity become overlapping goals in creating gifted education programs (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2009).

Path Forward for Educators and Parents of Gifted Children

Rather than making an “either or” decision about the concept of creativity, a synthesized view provides the best path for supporting the creative potential of gifted children. As F. Scott Fitzgerald (1936) wrote, “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function” (p. 69). For parents and educators, a synthesized view allows one to see the forest, as well as, the trees in order to develop creativity skills of gifted children in the 21st century.

Educational Landscape

The educational landscape is changing. New modes of teaching are building creativity skills while building academic skills. Models such as The Torrance Incubation Model of Teaching and Learning (TIM) (Murdock & Keller-Mathers, 2008), Socratic seminars (Chorzempa & Lapidus, 2009) and 21st Century education (Keller-Mathers and Pagliaroli, In press) are gaining traction. With these models, creativity is not viewed as yet another objective to fit into the curriculum. It is through this metaphor of “intellectual estuary” (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2009), or combining creativity and academics into one path, where teachers can guide gifted students in becoming effective citizens, workers and leaders.

As creativity research becomes more abundant and technology for understanding brain function improves, the concept of creativity is sure to change. Until then, a synthesized view of creativity allows gifted students to thrive and reap rich rewards amidst the paradox of the domain general and domain specific debate. Gardner (2009) wrote, “...the creating mind breaks new ground. It puts forth new ideas, poses unfamiliar questions, conjures up fresh ways of thinking, arrives at unexpected answers” (p. 3). As parents and teachers, it is our role to cultivate the creative thinking potential of gifted students by using a combination of domain general and domain specific approaches to build lifelong creativity skills.

Alicia Arnold facilitates breakthrough innovation workshops, conducts creativity training and teaches graduate-level courses in marketing. She consults with school systems on future visioning, educational planning & the Torrance Incubation Model for Teaching & Learning. Alicia holds an M.B.A in Marketing from Bentley College, a Graduate Certificate in Creativity and Change Leadership from Buffalo State College and is certified in the Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving process. She can be reached at alicarnold@yahoo.com

Creativity & Gifted Education Continued...

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NAGC Call for Nominations Continued...

Submission Deadline:

To nominate someone for this award, you must be a member of NAGC's Creativity Network. All nominations by Creativity Network Members must be postmarked or e-mailed by April 16, 2010. Please e-mail nominations to kellersm@buffalostate.edu or fax nominations to 716-878-4040. Please include your membership number or name to verify membership. Provide an email address for confirmation of your submission. You can also mail nominations to: E. Paul Torrance Award, ATTN: Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers, International Center for Studies in Creativity, 1300 Elmwood Avenue, Chase Hall 246, Buffalo, NY 14222.

Selection Guidelines:

Any member of the Creativity Network may nominate any individual or group for the award. The nominator does not have to know the nominee personally, but must secure the permission of the nominee to propose his or her name for the award.

- A brief statement of support expressing the nominee's qualifications for receiving the E. Paul Torrance Award must accompany each nomination (100 words or less).
- Include the name of the nominee and contact information.
- Nominations must be postmarked, faxed, or e-mailed by April 16, 2010.

Submission Guidelines:

- Membership in NAGC is not a necessary criterion for consideration of potential recipients of the award.
- A person who has been previously nominated for the award but did not win the award may be re-nominated.

Voting on Nominees by Network Members:

Creativity Network members are notified by NAGC electronically when voting opens. Votes are due to the chair of the award by May 30, 2010.

Announcement of the Winner:

An announcement of the winner will be made, and a plaque will be presented, at NAGC's Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia in November. The winner will be notified by August 31, 2010, to allow sufficient time to make plans to attend the convention. In the event that the recipient cannot attend the event, a representative will be selected to receive the award on behalf of the recipient.

2003 Winner Jerry Flack Discusses the History of the Torrance Award "Back when the Creativity Division was no more than a small formative committee of seven or eight interested NAGC members, that group determined that one of the purpose of a creative study groups within the NAGC membership should be the annual recognition of individuals or organizations that support and enhance creativity and the creative development of youth. The committee petitioned the NAGC Board of Directors for permission to give the annual award, appropriately named in honor of the person most people in our field acknowledge as the 'Father of Creativity.' Approval was given to the new Creativity Division, nominations were sought, and the award was bestowed for the first time at the Orlando convention site in 1988."

Mission Statement of the Creativity Network The Creativity Network believes that creativity is a basic and necessary function of healthy and productive individual and that the health and productivity of a society is reflective of the degree of creativity among its citizenry. Therefore, it is the commitment of this Network to initiate, develop and implement practices and materials that will promote the creative potential of all persons. Specifically, the Network will undertake activities that will:

- Promote the recognition and acceptance of, and the commitment to, creativity as a critical area of giftedness
- Promote research in the area of creativity, as well as creative approaches to research
- Provide practical strategies and activities to foster creativity
- Increase the public's awareness and acceptance of creative thinking as an essential skill

Other past recipients of the E. Paul Torrance Award include:

1988 *Dr. June Scobee*
1989 *Bill Moyers*
1990 *Dr. Calvin Taylor*
1991 *Future Problem Solving Program*
1992 *Dr. Sidney Parnes*
1993 *Odyssey of the Mind*
1994 *Dr. Carol Schlichter*
1995 *Dr. Donald Treffinger*
1996 *Judy Galbraith*
1997 *Dr. Alane Starko*
1998 *Dr. Teresa Amabile*
1999 *Dr. Gary Davis*
2000 *Dr. Mark Runco*
2001 *Dr. Ruth Noller*
2002 *Dr. Sally Todd*
2003 *Dr. Jerry Flack & Dr. Joe Renzull*
2004 *Dr. Mary Meeker*
2005 *Dr. Mary Frasier*
2006 *Dr. Robert Sternberg*
2007 *Dr. Jonathon Plucker*
2008 *Dr. James Kaufman*
2009 *Dr. Bonnie Cramond*

Contact Celebrate Creativity!

If you have a potential article, book review, lesson plan, or other creative idea that you'd like to submit for our next newsletter, please contact us.

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