

Creativity Teaching

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An area in which gifted and talented children often excel is in creativity, although the intellectually gifted child may not be creatively gifted as well. There is still debate about the correlation between creativity and intelligence, and it seems that after an IQ of about 110 the relationship drops to virtually nothing. This means that the creative and intelligent characteristics of these children might be quite independent of each other. Unfortunately creativity is an extremely difficult concept to define, and subsequently to measure. It is certainly something to do with our perception, intuition and higher consciousness, thinking skills and problem solving as well as the use of our senses (Clark, 1982). The term, in fact, has multiple meanings and can be defined quite differently by a variety of people (Klein, 1982).

Some of the earlier and most interesting work on this theory was conducted by Paul Torrance (1977) who devised tests of creative thinking, and he also produced a checklist for creative students which make the creative person

look really good. Characteristics include skills in group activities, problem solving, the ability to express their emotions easily, keen sense of humor, originality and persistence in problem solving. They are also curious, have high energy, are idealistic, have artistic interests and are keenly attracted to the unusual, the complex and the mysterious. Liam Hudson (1971) suggested we should ask children what uses they could make of an object such as a bucket, a brick or a newspaper, as an indication of creativity. The following list was given to the author by a nine-year-old girl in just ten minutes, and certainly indicates unusual thinking at least.

The difference between IQ tests and creativity test questions can be summed up in the small section of two tests following.

Typical IQ Test Questions

Glove is to hand as shoe is to ?

What is a bucket ?

If a girl goes into a shop and buys 37p worth of sweets and gives the man 50p, how much change will she get back?

Typical Creativity Test Questions

What would happen if everybody was born with three fingers and no thumb?

How many uses can you think of for a bucket?

How many different ways can you think of to get an answer of 77 ?

Some distinctions can be seen in this table, where the IQ tests only have one correct answer whereas the creativity questions stress the importance of many answers.

Creativity is now firmly established as one of the significant categories associated with giftedness and talent, and is one of the terms used in most broad definitions. (Renzulli, Sternberg, Davidson and Ogilvie).

With the widening of the concept of giftedness to include creativity and other abilities, the term "giftedness" has now become a multi-category concept and most people recognize creativity as a

distinctive talent that some children seem to have. Jellen and Urban (1988) state that high creativity is seen as the ability to create a new, unusual and surprising product by perceiving, processing and utilising the maximum of available information. The same authors drew up their creative thinking drawing production in which the children are asked to complete the drawing which a famous artist has not completed and give it an appropriate title (see George(1992) for more details). The test allows each child to expand, extend, develop and create something that is unique and satisfying to the child and not necessarily the tester marking such a test, and looks for eleven evaluation criteria such as making a complete picture from the six fragments; going outside the barrier of the frame which is typical of many creative thinkers in that they take risks; joining up the six fragments; a sense of humor is seen, and giving it an appropriate title. The following are some examples of children's creations, and you may just like to try assessing these based on the above criteria. Readers will appreciate that in order to avoid culture bias the researchers only used a drawing task with no verbal clues, and it would be

interesting to see in different countries whether there are major differences between genders, cultures, and what the test really tells us about children's creative ability.

Encouraging Creativity in the Classroom

One of the goals of gifted education is to develop creative and imaginative thinking, as well as problem solving. An important aim here is for gifted students to be encouraged to function as creative and productive people in their society. This encouragement comes from the provision of appropriate learning environments and learning experiences, and are designed for the production of ideas that reflect growth from the unknown to the original.

Recommendations for creative teaching include teacher enthusiasm, encouraging self-initiated projects, acceptance of individual differences in our children, the encouragement of divergent thinking and certainly looking beyond IQ scores.

Creative learning can result in children achieving higher, improved motivation, self-confidence and a better attitude towards school. The learning experiences should be designed to provide for the

development of creativity through the integration of cognitive skills, affective skills, intuition and talents in a specific area. Although there is still some difficulty in defining the concepts of creativity, many researchers have tried to make the term more tangible by identifying specific creative abilities; Guilford (1967), Torrance (1966), Davis and Rimm (1989), and the most widely quoted four are:-

Fluency quantity - the ability to generate many solutions or alternatives. For example

Think of several possible ways to ...

Come up with ideas for ...

List as many ways to ...

Flexibility - thinking in a variety of categories and taking several approaches. For example

Think of different kinds of reasons for ...

List as many different ways to ...

What are the different kinds of ...

Originality - the ability to arrive at novel, unusual, non-conforming conclusions-uniqueness. For example
Think of unique and unusual ways to...
Think of ideas no-one else will think of.

Elaboration - the ability to add details

and develop ideas. For example Think of details to develop your main idea.

Add supplementary to make the basic idea clearer.

In England, creativity is encouraged in children by the following methods.

Firstly, by flexibility in the curriculum in spite of now having a national curriculum.

Secondly, by encouraging thinking skills with much more participation by children rather than rote learning. Children are also encouraged to write and read a great deal, which are all aids to creativity. Children are now allowed to start school at the age of four if they are ready for it, and this is also helpful in stimulating creativity. In addition, in our schools there are many extra activities such as clubs, societies and competitions. Finally, there is limited support from travelling specialist teachers who go in to work with groups of children. This again gives children the opportunity to show their creative potential.

The survival and achievements of the human species owe much to one characteristic - a capacity for creative problem solving. A major objective of this conference is to recognize and foster this special ability. We must not

allow any child to underachieve or waste their talent. If they do, this will be tragic for the community, for the world but especially for the child. Elizabeth, aged 12, took a different approach from the rest of her class when they were asked to write an essay on 'conflict'.

Conflict Surprise (a receipt for war)

Ingredients:

5 kg of gr*eed

2 kg of envy

1 raw anger

1 large selfish (very ripe)

5 g of mistrust

7 kg of over ripe violence

3 large misunderstandings (if you have them)

Method:

Using a first, mix in the greed and envy, let it simmer for an hour. Kick the raw anger in. Squeeze the selfish and add it to thicken the mixture. Sprinkle in the mistrust and stir thoroughly. Using a tank (if you have one) fire in the violence. Beat in the misunderstandings take a world leader and empty its mind of peaceful thoughts. Using half the mixture refill the mind. Carefully put the world leader back in its place. Using a

UP IN SPACE.
I am in a space capsule,
and I am landing on a big planet
with craters in it and it is very
cold. I can jump very high and I
landed in a crater. There are funny
green animals here. There is no one
else here except me. I have a space
buggy and I drive around space in
it. I went on an exploration and found
funny flowers with spikes on. They have
pink leaves. I was so lonely that I went
home.

THE END.

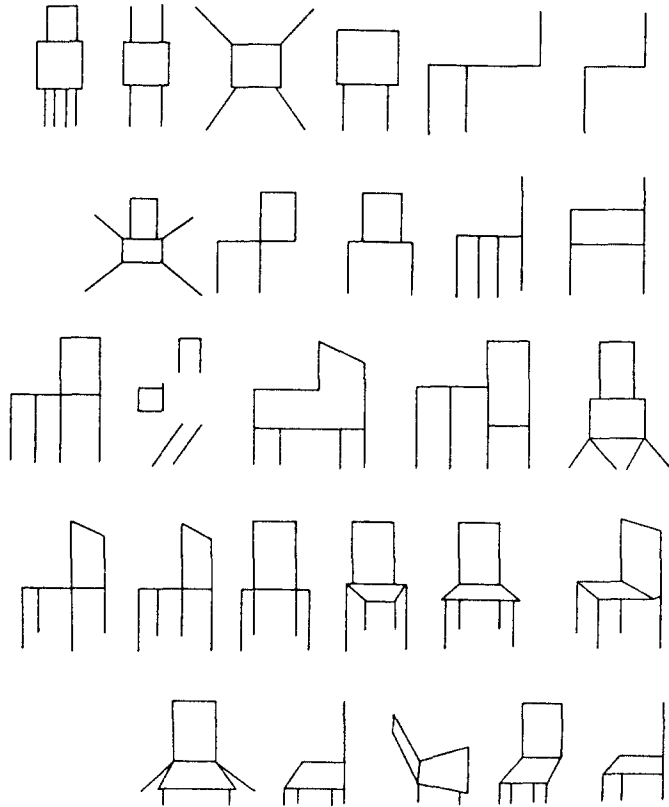
By Karen [unclear] Age 5½

Notice the skills of writing, the language, knowledge, human and the human touches at the end.

sword spread the other half of the mixture across one of the world's countries. Remember to stand back after you have done this; you may become a victim of your own creation. Watch for the after effects, you will enjoy the pain and suffering. You will find it impossible to clean the kitchen when you finished; all the ingredients

will contaminate the rest of the kitchen. Quick tip. For fuller flavour, act first, think later.

In a craft lesson the class were asked to draw a chair from as many angles as possible. Susan, aged 14, whose father is an architect, produced 17 drawings.

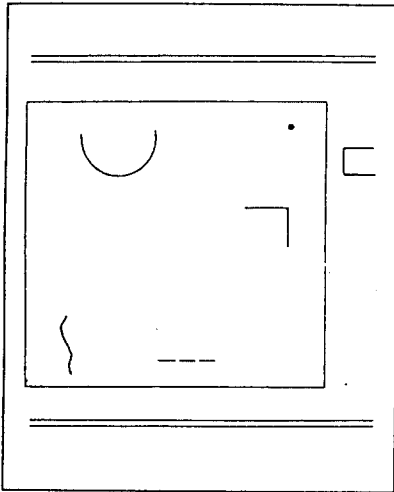


CREATIVITY TEST. USES OF A NEWSPAPER.

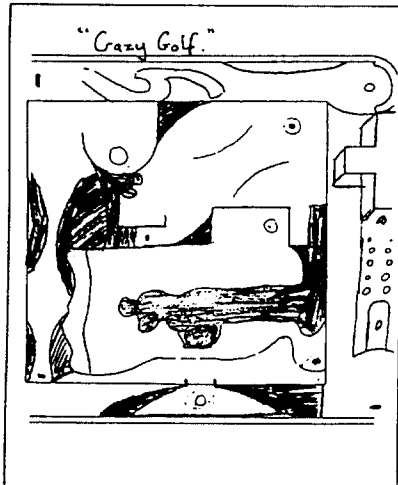
1. Read it.
2. Use as a tablecloth.
3. Make paper hats with it.
4. Draw funny faces on it
5. Make paper aeroplanes -
6. Make paper people
7. Make collage.
8. Make paper wallets
9. Screw up for use as a projectile.
10. Fill in football result.
11. Do the crossword.
12. Cut out the photographs from it.
13. Make dress patterns of it.
14. Make a kite with it.
15. Make a fire with it.
16. Use it as wrapping paper
17. Wrap up fish and chips in it.
etc., etc.

A famous artist was called away to the phone having just begun a new creation. He never returned to it. How would his finished work have looked?

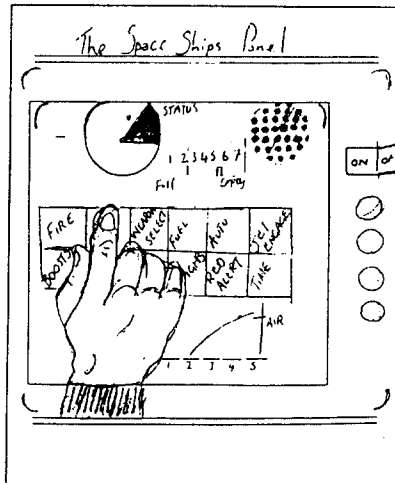
You have fifteen minutes to complete it ...



Jasdir Panesar 13



Chris Coleman 12



James Thomas 12

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