

F. Graeme Chalmers

ABout Creativity

I am an art educator but I am not a selfish one. I believe that all "content areas" in education must promote creativity and that there is a need for educational leaders in different fields to make practical application of existing knowledge about creativity. Like them I can say my ABC's. I can read the literature:

A

BRAHAM H. MASLOW

ROBERT C.

B

URKHART

C

ALVIN W. TAYLOR

D

ONALD W. MACKINNON

E

ELLIOT W. EISNER

S.

F

ARBBER

J.P. **G** UILFORD

W.B. **H** ALL

MAURICE **I** STEIN

J ACOB W. GETZELS

LAURENCE **K** UBIE

W. **L** AMBERT BRITTAIN

M ARSHALL McLUHAN

N ATHAN KOGAN

ALEX F. **O** SBORNE

P HILLIP W. JACKSON

ROBERT **Q** WILSON

CARL **R** ROGERS

JEROME	S	BRUNER
E. PAUL	T	ORRANCE
	U	fill in the blank
	V	IKTOR LOWENFELD
MICHAEL	W	ALLACH
FRANK	X	BARRON
	Y	ou fill in the blank
LAURA	Z	IRBES

I can internalize the concepts:

A ability to invent, improvise and explore
 adding and revising, accepting and rejecting
 alive, adventurous, aware, absorbed, alert, artistic

B behaving creatively
 boundary pushing
 boundary breaking

C composing
 crazier and saner
 constructing, curiosity
 courageousness

D destroying and making
discerning, discovering, determination
destructive and constructive

E expression of one's uniqueness
exploration, experimentation, elaboration
eager for experience
emotional, energetic

F failing and succeeding, freedom to rebel
freedom to make decisions that are different
freshness, flexibility, fluency

G generally well-informed

H honesty

I inventive, improvising, integrating
individual experience, investigating
interaction, imagination, independence
inquiring, intelligence, industry

J joy

K keen

L like
love

M making and destroying
more primitive and more cultured
mysterious, manipulation

N novel, new
natural
nonconforming

O open, being oneself
originality
odd
organising

D problem-solving, perceptive
 planning, preoccupation
 playing, persistence

J questioning

R rearranging, reflective
 responsiveness, receptiveness
 rejecting and accepting
 revising and adding, resolute

S succeeding and failing
 spontaneous, self
 speculative
 stimulating

T tenacious
 thorough

U uniqueness, uninhibited
 intrigued by the unknown
 uncovering

V visionary
 versatility

W willingness to take risks

X e-X-perimental

Y youthful enthusiasm

Z zany

at . . . finally I must use all my energy to respect each indivi-
 dual and offer him more choices in the way he is able to solve prob-

less and react to his environment.

..But do I as an art educator have special RESPONS- IBILITY in fostering creativity ?

The concept of creativity has not always been associated with education in the arts. For nineteenth century educators in Europe and North America the arts involved skills to be learned through graduated exercises, and little more.

During the twenties and thirties progressive educators spoke of unlocking the creative powers of the child, of removing the barriers that hindered his creative development, of freeing the child so that he may create. If creativity had a tenuous relationship to art education before the twenties, surely this relationship was cemented firmly thereafter. Art was seen as one of the major vehicles for unfolding the child's creative capacities; and more often than not, when an article or entire issue of a journal was to be devoted to "creativity", the cover displayed a group of children painting or working with clay. Creativity and work in the visual arts had become synonymous.

Art educators responded favorably to Freudian conceptions on a number of counts. First, they made provision for the imaginative life of man that was thought to be so important for the artist. Second, they tended to emphasize the affective and emotional life of man, which for most art educators is the lifeblood of art.¹

Art educators like those referred to above, have been accused of conceiving of art and creativity as mysteries that must be discussed in poetic, even romantic terms. But scientific inquiry in

the sociology of art does tell as that at times the artist is indeed a magician, as well as a teacher, mythmaker, sociotherapist, interpreter, enhancer and decorator, ascriber of status, propagandist, and catalyst of social change. But, at times, isn't the scientist also many of these things?

Can one really teach science creatively? Yes, probably, at least we can try. But is there the same opportunity to invent new symbols and ideas, to rearrange established organizations, and to integrate new or borrowed ideas? Yes, probably. If education, or "schooling" is to assure the perpetuation of certain cultural values then the educative process probably has to be focused upon convergent, rather than divergent, thinking and production, as, for example, in learning to read or to add. But another purpose of education is to change cultural values.

We are told that artists differ most from non-artists (in other than the skills they develop and the tools they use) in their ways of thinking and perceiving. Artists seem to look for ways of thinking which are original and unusual; they organise and combine ideas so that they become unusual conceptions, and show a richness in their associations and ways of expression -- but scientists also do this! Artists display a breadth of interests, particularly in the theoretical and abstract areas as opposed to the realistic and practical, and they are extremely responsive to sense data, seeking out the subtle and delicate impressions. Their thinking is marked by a great deal of elaborated fantasy.² Einstein said that to raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science. Unfortunately we can create destructively -- science has multiplied the power of the war-makers. Scientific inquiry

must be directed toward more creative endeavours. We do have a creative responsibility to use the vast potential of scientific and technological resources, coupled with our own aesthetic sensibilities, to improve the quality of human life and solve local, national, and global problems. If our world needs creative and constructive investigators and problem solvers (and it certainly does) and if art education can develop such people (and it can) then we need art education! For art, like science, is a creative and investigative process.³

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references

1. E.W. Eisner and D.W. Ecker, Readings in Art Education, Waltham: Blaisdell, 1966, p.280.
2. B.T. Eiduson, "Artist and Nonartist, A Comparative Study" Journal of Personality 26, 1958, pp.13-28.
3. J.B. Conant, On Understanding Science, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947.