IMPLICATIONS FOR HOME and CLASSROOM

Recent research shows that creativity is present in all children, regardless of their age, race, socioeconomic status, and learning differences. Listed below are typically asked student questions followed by creativity-fostering suggestions for dealing with them:

“But why isn’t this the right answer?”
- Emphasize curricula and activities that avoid predictable, only one correct response outcomes.
- Try not to suggest (even implicitly) that your way is the best or only way.
- Be tolerant of children who exhibit nonconformity or tend to do things their own way.
- Allow children to take risks, challenge existing ideas, have time to reflect, and have time to “do their own thing.”
- Monitor your expectations and actions, especially the implicit ones.
- Reward early creative performances and set up systems for positive feedback for continued performance in the same area.

“Can’t I work alone? Can’t we do something else?”
- Use alternative methods such as portfolios and performance-based assessments to assess creative potential.
- De-emphasize grades as the “goal” of learning. Accentuate the joy of learning and creating.

“Can’t I think of anything.”
- Provide environments that stimulate and encourage creative ideas. Reward a broad range of creative behaviors.
- Be a mentor to a child who displays interest in your particular domain or field of expertise.
- Teach students creativity enhancement techniques (e.g., SCAMPER, brainstorming, synectics, attribute listing) to use with their science fair projects, art activities, and writing assignments to design a more creative product.

“But I’m not doing this at home/school.”
- Reinforce creative behaviors at home and at school. Teachers, let parents know what their child is doing at school and explain how parents can help at home. Parents, let teachers know what you’re doing at home with your child and ask teachers how you can reinforce the creative behaviors being taught in school.
- Discuss the concept of “creativity” with children–have them utilize fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.
- Recognize that creativity incorporates a variety of processes (problem finding/solving, divergent/convergent thinking, self-expression), domains (arts, sciences, humanities), and motivational and personality factors (self-concept, self-confidence, intrinsic motivation).

...there are two lasting and important gifts we can give our children, one is roots and the other is wings.”  –Hodding Carter
Children can be taught to be more creative (Torrance, 1987).

Some researchers believe that all children possess the skills and processes necessary to produce creative work (Runco, 1993; Weisberg, 1986).

People tend to underestimate the originality of the work of others (Runco, 1989).

Children tend to be less creative when outside constraints are placed upon their creativity (Hennessey & Amabile, 1988).

Eminent creators such as Einstein, Picasso, and Martha Graham exhibited a high degree of self-promotion and lack of conformity (Gardner, 1993).

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References