

Resources by Skill: Creativity

The Importance of Creativity

Conducting research on creativity is very difficult, because researchers cannot agree on what creativity is, exactly, or how to measure it. However, there have been attempts to do so, and as the field begins to focus more on creativity as a social-emotional skill, research in this area will become more robust.

Boxx et al. (2013) provide an overview of the research to date on creativity, especially its relationship to academic achievement. Research has shown that this relationship is complex: some conclude that the effects of creativity on academic achievement are affected by intelligence (high creativity can make up for lower intelligence), but the particular measure of creativity used in a study affects these results. Researchers have also found gender differences in the relationship between creativity and academic achievement.

OECD (2015) notes positive and statistically significant results for employment and health with increased openness to new experience, a component of creativity.

In any case, creativity is often seen as desirable in its own right. For example, business leaders believe that successfully navigating today's world will require creativity (**Hadani and Jaeger, 2015**).

Cultivating Creativity

Teachers often claim that they value creativity generally, while devaluing children's creative behaviors. For example, conscientiousness, which is often valued in academic settings, has been found to be negatively correlated with creativity (**Boxx et al., 2013**). The challenge for instructors, then, is to promote creative behaviors despite adult tendencies not to do so.

Context is extremely important to creativity. Creativity can be influenced by environmental factors and active involvement in novel experiences (**Hadani and Jaeger, 2015**). When children are encouraged and offered opportunities to be creative, they are more likely to be engaged in learning, which in turn leads to higher achievement (**Boxx et al., 2013**).

Boxx et al. (2013) note that there is extensive evidence that creativity can be learned. Several researchers have used extrinsic rewards to encourage creativity, although others argue that this can produce negative effects if students are concerned that their work will be evaluated. Some recommendations for creativity training include basing activities on a clear understanding of the particular skills required for creativity, and including opportunities to practice these skills using real world tasks.

Hadani and Jaeger (2015) divide creativity into seven components, and provide research-supported strategies to promote each (for ages 6-14):

- Imagination and Originality
- Flexibility

- Decision making
- Communication and Self-expression
- Motivation
- Collaboration
- Action and Movement

Their report also includes example activities to promote creativity.

Works Cited

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