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Creativity – what is it?

As a primary teacher turned senior lecturer, and therefore by default, academic, I am now involved in initial teacher training. I have recently been intrigued by the idea that creativity in the primary classroom could raise achievement and this blog is intended to record research findings, observations and personal reflections on this subject.

Defining creativity appears to have absorbed the passions of many over the centuries, with Ancient Greek, Judaic, Islamic and Christian traditions identifying it as a divine inspiration. Ironically, it was the Romantic Era in the mid 19th century that brought in the view that creativity also involved human artistic capabilities (1) rather than just a Divine Hand and, as researchers continued to dig deep, the 20th century revealed that it could also be seen in science, entrepreneurship, mathematics and design (2).

And it appears to be the case that you don't need to be an Einstein, Mozart or Gandhi in order to be deemed creative. The everyday exploration of children (and dare I say it, adults too) can also be creative (1)

So, what do we mean by being creative? What does creativity look like? How would I spot it in the classroom, or in my kitchen for that matter?

It appears that there is no one defined answer:

“Creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value” (3)

“Creativity requires both originality and effectiveness” (4)

Creativity “uses the criteria of novelty, utility, and surprise” (5).

And there are a few others in here (which is your favourite?):

[copyblogger-creativity-poster](#)

However, whether an observer of life or an academic researcher in the field there appears to be some commonality of thought; that of taking the glimpse of a new idea and running with it.

Talking of which, and in conclusion, I am reminded of a tale retold by Sir Ken Robinson:

I had a great story recently – I love telling it – of a little girl who was in a drawing lesson. She was 6, and she was in the back, drawing. The teacher said this little girl hardly ever paid attention.

In this drawing lesson, she did. And the teacher was fascinated.

She went over to her, and she said, “What are you drawing?”

And the girl said, “I'm drawing a picture of God”.

The teacher said, “Nobody knows what God looks like”.

The girl said, “They will in a minute”. (6)

<https://academicbantersite.wordpress.com/2017/08/04/creativity-what-is-it/>

References:

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- (4) Runco, M.A. (2012) 'The Standard Definition of Creativity', *Creativity Research Journal*, 24 (1), pp.92-96.
- (5) Simonton, D.K. (2012) 'Taking the U.S. Patent Office Criteria Seriously: A Quantitative Three-Criterion Creativity Definition and Its Implications', *Creativity Research Journal*, 24 (2-3), pp.97-106.
- (6) <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=351552772>