HONING CREATIVITY IN STUDENTS: LETTING THEM CREATE MEANINGFUL MISTAKES

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Creativity transcends many things: it does not only pertain to the aptitude to draw and paint but is also equally important as critical thinking. Even amongst 1500 CEOs (chief executive officers) from different industries and companies around the world believe that it surpasses integrity, rigor, and vision as a critical attribute to successfully navigate a competitive world (IBM News, 2010). As such, to achieve this success, educators must cultivate students’ creativeness in their curriculum.

Nurturing the creativity in children during their early stages of development allows the possibility of building a long term success for life. Being creative is a mode of thinking rather than an action. Stimulating their creativity would empower them in asking questions, encourage self-expression, improve their problem-solving skills, trigger innovative ideas, and overall make the classroom experience more exciting.

Dr. Robert Epstein, a creativity expert and psychologist, identified four competencies necessary for creative expression (Henderson, 2008):

1. Catching – conserving new ideas;
2. Challenging – providing tough problems to solve;
3. Broadening – improving creativity through learning new and interesting things;
4. Surrounding – immersing in diverse environments
To realize these competencies, we must start by developing a creative atmosphere in class. For example: When integrating creativity in group discussions, ask your students to present their insights through roleplaying, poster-making, or in any creative way they can think of. Permit them to express themselves openly. This will reduce tension in students and will make them think of the activity as less of a class requirement and more of an amusing way to enjoy the class.

It is not only in art where students can hone their creativity. In math and sciences, being creative is a necessary skill to solve complex problems and generate experimental designs. Try to flail out an equation for them so solve, or let them perform an experiment and ponder on the possible outcome. Providing a room for students to make mistakes without fear will improve their creativity through bold improvisation and risk-taking.

Creativity is not a binary; solving a problem does not always have to be black and white. Sometimes, even the most unconventional way to solve it works out the most. Being creative means learning how to think outside the box and being innovative. We need to teach our children that when things do not work out for them as the way they planned it to, do not give up. Making meaningful mistakes allows us to learn and from that, we can try again with a different style approach. It is only foolish to expect a different result from doing the same thing, hence we should teach our children to think innovatively. To integrate creativity in class, educators can look for online learning materials, resources, and ideas that would be applicable in a curriculum. More importantly, be a role model to your students; show them how to be creative rather than telling them.

References:
