



Creativity and Education

Creativity across all areas of education fosters children and young people's own creativity and leads to the development of key skills such as imaginative thinking, innovation, purposeful risk-taking, critical thinking, responding positively to failure and resilience.^{1 2}

What is creativity and why is it important?

The Commissioner for Children and Young People's 2011 Thinker in Residence: Unlocking Creativity program has resulted in increased community debate about the broad value of a creative approach to education.

Thinker in Residence Paul Collard, from the UK-based organisation Creativity, Culture and Education, noted in his residency report that the term creativity is used in different ways and in different contexts³.

The influential United Kingdom report *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* defines creativity as:

Imaginative activity fashioned to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.⁴

Based on the work of Claxton et al (2010)⁵, Creativity, Culture and Education has identified five 'habits of mind' as indicators of the presence of creativity.⁶

1. Inquisitive	Wondering and questioning; Exploring and investigating; Challenging assumptions
2. Persistent	Tolerating uncertainty; Sticking with difficulty; Daring to be different
3. Imaginative	Playing with possibilities; Making connections; Using intuition
4. Disciplined	Crafting and improving; Developing techniques; Reflecting critically
5. Collaborative	Cooperating appropriately; Giving and receiving feedback; Sharing the 'product'

Increasingly, governments, businesses and communities regard these types of skills as fundamental to social, economic, cultural and technological growth.^{7 8} In 2010, IBM's global Chief Executive Officer Study found that, more than any other single quality, executives believe that competing in today's economy requires creativity.⁹

There is also increasing recognition that at an individual level creativity improves children and young people's self-esteem, motivation and overall achievement.

Students who are encouraged to think creatively:

- are more open to new ideas and challenges
- are more able to solve problems
- respond well to dealing with failure
- are more resilient
- become more effective learners
- have greater ownership over their learning.^{10 11}

In terms of educational attainment, research into the long-term outcomes of the Creative Partnerships program in the UK found that:

Young people known to have attended Creative Partnerships activities out-performed those in the same schools... at all three key stages. This was evident in average scores in English, Mathematics and Science...¹²

Do children and young people think creativity is important?

The 2011 Thinker in Residence demonstrated that children and young people value creativity and want to engage in artistic and cultural experiences.

As part of the project, seven student workshops were facilitated. In the series of workshops, students were asked to indicate: (i) how important they thought creativity was; (ii) how important they thought it was in their families; and (iii) how important they thought schools considered creativity. The workshops showed that:

- consistently, creativity is of great importance to children and young people
- within families, the importance of creativity varies greatly
- a majority of students think creativity is not considered important by their schools.¹³

The workshops also found that children and young people with creative interests were reluctant to pursue them in lieu of a more traditional career, particularly for students in schools that did not specialise in the arts or have a planned approach to creativity.

Comments from the students involved in the workshops included:

"Creativity is what I will need most when I leave school, especially if I want to start a business or get a good job."

"Art helps you to be versatile."

"I see value and need for creativity because without creativity there is no way to explore new ideas."

"Singing out loud and playing my guitar makes me feel peaceful and calm."

"A creative mind is going to help you do well in most jobs."

Workshops with teachers on creativity explored the same concepts and showed that teachers recognise the importance of inquisitiveness, wondering, questioning, exploring, investigating and challenging assumptions as fundamental to successful learning.

However, teachers also commented that the typical school day left very little opportunity to use these creative strategies with students and appropriately designed and targeted professional development programs would be required to effect the changes required to allow them to utilise such strategies.

Facts about creativity and education

The Programme for International Students Assessment 2009 data shows that:

- While the average test score of young Australian students places them near the top of the international league tables, their interest and self-confidence are near the bottom.
- Education is increasing, rather than reducing, social inequalities
- Wellbeing and feelings of competency reduce dramatically among children and young people as they progress through education.¹⁴

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development figures suggest that Australia has problems of inequity in educational outcomes that stretch far beyond the Aboriginal community.¹⁵

Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data, 37 per cent of children and young people reported they had participated in arts activity outside formal education, with over 75 per cent, primarily aged between nine and 11 years, attributing participating in the arts to learning to play a musical instrument.¹⁶

Many of the jobs in the new economies of the developed world will not be in traditional forms of employment. According to UK Government statistics, 60 per cent of all jobs that students in school today will do are not yet invented.¹⁷

How well is creativity and education applied in WA?

The Department of Education and the Department of Culture and the Arts are two key government agencies with a focus on creativity and education in WA.

The Department of Education's *Classrooms First* strategy emphasises the importance of a well-rounded education. As well as achievement across various learning areas, the strategy states that a successful student is one that, for example, is adaptable, resourceful, able to problem solve and demonstrate initiative.¹⁸

The Department of Culture and the Arts, *Young People and the Arts Action Plan 2010-12* is part of its broader *Strategic Plan 2010-14*.^{19 20} The rationale of the action plan is to allow all young people to have access to the arts regardless of their economic, social, cultural or geographic circumstances. A key component in implementing the action plan is partnerships with arts organisations and other government agencies.

Creating Connections: An Arts in Education Partnership Framework 2010-2014 is an existing partnership between the Department of Education and the Department of Culture and the Arts that provides opportunities for teaching and learning from Kindergarten to year 12, including vocational education and training undertaken in schools. The partnership involves the development of annual action plans that aim to have a direct effect on the arts (i.e. dance, design, drama, media, music and visual

arts) and English (including creative writing). The partnership also aims to contribute to achievement in the remaining six learning areas.

Growing Future Innovators, being implemented by the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) and Edith Cowan University, is an example of a creativity and education project in WA.²¹ The project examines how contemporary arts organisations, like PICA, can deliver 'next practice' school learning programs that encourage and promote innovation in the arts and across a range of other disciplines. The learning programs will allow young people and their teachers to cultivate the values and culture of innovation and develop high levels of creativity, self-efficacy, energy, risk-propensity, leadership, resilience, tolerance of ambiguity, intuition and questioning.

What needs to happen in Western Australia?

The Department of Education and the Department of Culture and the Arts through *Creative Connections* have taken a significant step in incorporating creativity into education in WA. Further work, however, is required.

Of particular importance is the expansion of the assessment and evaluation of creativity and education beyond the current measures of student attainment and behaviour. For example, the Creativity Counts project in Scotland developed a creativity framework against which it comprehensively assessed and evaluated creativity in the areas of learning aims, learning processes, relationships and the environment, tasks, resources and products.²²

At a policy level, Creativity Counts identified the need for:

- creativity to be built in as a key feature of all areas of the curriculum
- creativity to be fostered at an early stage of a child's education
- flexible assessment procedures.²³

As identified in the *Report of the 2011 Thinker in Residence: Unlocking Creativity*, there is also a need for increasing the knowledge of families and schools about the importance and benefits of creativity and providing teachers with professional development opportunities in the use of creative approaches in the classroom.

In summary, there are several priority areas for WA:

- A significant four-year program be established to pilot a creative partnerships program in schools across Western Australia.
- Increasing knowledge of the importance and benefits of creativity and education at a government, non-government, community and family level.
- Creativity to be built-in as a key feature of all areas of the education curriculum.
- Evidence-based professional development programs and resources for teachers on using creativity in education across all subject areas.
- The development of assessment and evaluation procedures and processes beyond the current measures of student attainment and behaviour.
- Improved collection of meaningful data on the engagement and participation of children and young people in cultural and creative activities.

For more information on this topic, see :

Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, *Report of the 2011 Thinker in Residence: Unlocking Creativity*: www.ccyp.wa.gov.au

Creativity Counts, Scotland:

http://www.playfieldinstitute.co.uk/information/pdfs/publications/Flourishing_Wellbeing/Creativity_Counts_A_Report_of_Findings_from_Schools_publication.pdf

Creativity, Culture and Education, United Kingdom:

<http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org>

Department of Culture and the Arts (WA): <http://www.dca.wa.gov.au>

Growing Future Innovators, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (WA):

<http://2www.pica.org.au/view/Growing+Future+Innovators/83/>

Lincoln Centre Institute for the Arts in Education, United States of America: <http://www.lcinstitute.org/>

¹ Lincoln Centre/institute 2012, *Imagination Summit: Reports & Resources* [website], viewed 23 January 2012, <http://lciweb.lincolncenter.org/imagination-summit/reports-and-resource>, United States of America.

² Scottish Executive Education Department 2006, *Promoting Creativity in Education: Overview of Key National Policy Developments Across the UK: An Information Paper* [website], viewed 18 January 2012, <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hmiepcie.html#5>, Scotland.

³ Collard P 2011, *Report of the 2011 Thinker in Residence: Unlocking Creativity*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, p. 33.

⁴ National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education 1999, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education, Report to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport*, United Kingdom, p. 30.

⁵ Claxton G et al 2010, *Bodies of knowledge: How the learning sciences could transform practical and vocational education*, Centre for Real-World Learning, University of Winchester, United Kingdom, p.18.

⁶ Collard P 2011, *Report of the 2011 Thinker in Residence: Unlocking Creativity*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, pp. 34&35.

⁷ Lincoln Centre/institute 2012, *Imagination Summit: Reports & Resources* [website], viewed 23 January 2012, <http://lciweb.lincolncenter.org/imagination-summit/reports-and-resource>, United States of America.

⁸ Education Scotland 2012, *About Creativity* [website], viewed 12 January 2012, Scottish Government.

⁹ IBM 2010, *Capitalizing on Complexity: Insights from the Global Chief Executive Officer Study* [website], viewed 18 January 2012, <http://www-35.ibm.com/services/us/ceo/ceostudy2010/index.html>, IBM.

¹⁰ Education Scotland 2012, *About Creativity* [website], viewed 12 January 2012, <http://www.ltsotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/approaches/creativity/about/index.asp>, Scottish Government.

¹¹ Learning and Teaching Scotland 2004, *Creativity Counts: A Report from Findings of Schools*, ISBN 1 85955 998 0, Scotland, p. 5.

¹² Kendall L 2008, *The longer-term impact of Creative Partnerships on the attainment of young people: Results from 2005 and 2006*, National Foundation for Educational Research, United Kingdom, p.i.

¹³ Students from John Curtin and Roseworth primary schools were an exception. Both schools have extensive cultural and creative education programs.

¹⁴ Organisation of Co-operation and Economic and Development 2011, *Effective Teaching for Improving Students' Motivation, Curiosity, and Self-Confidence in Science* OECD, Francesco Avvisati posted on http://www.oecd.org/document/44/0,3746,en_2649_35845581_47667180_1_1_1_1,00.html

¹⁵ Programme for International Students Assessment 2009, *Results: Overcoming Social Background: Equity in Learning Opportunities and Outcomes (Volume II)* [website], viewed 23 January 2012, http://www.pisa.oecd.org/document/24/0,3746,en_32252351_46584327_46609752_1_1_1_1,00.html#tables_figures_dbase

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- ¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003 [website], viewed 23 January 2012, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbytitle/194BB890D4CE623DCA2569D70081601A?OpenDocument>
- ¹⁷ Collard P 2011, *Report of the 2011 Thinker in Residence: Unlocking Creativity*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, p.17.
- ¹⁸ Department of Education 2007, *Curriculum Leadership: An electronic journal for leaders in education* [website], viewed 18 January 2012, Vol 5 Issue 39, <http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=21586&issueID=10986>. Government of Western Australia.
- ¹⁹ Department of Culture and the Arts 2010, *Young People and the Arts Action Plan 2010 – 2012*, Government of Western Australia.
- ²⁰ Department of Culture and the Arts 2010, *Strategic Plan 2010-2014: Creating and Delivering Government Policy of Culture and the Arts*, Government of Western Australia, p.9.
- ²¹ Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts 2012, *Growing Future Innovators: A new approach to learning programs for young people* [website], viewed 23 January 2012, <http://www.pica.org.au/view/Growing+Future+Innovators/83/>
- ²² Learning and Teaching Scotland 2004, *Creativity Counts: A Report from Findings of Schools*, ISBN 1 85955 998 0, Scotland, pp. 15-22.
- ²³ Learning and Teaching Scotland 2004, *Creativity Counts: A Report from Findings of Schools*, ISBN 1 85955 998 0, Scotland, pp. 25&26.