

Valuing Creativity

Making It, LegoMasters, Masterchef, TheBlock, TheVoiceand soforth. How many of these creative 'reality' shows do your young people watch? Do they inspire them to engage in creative activity?

This article is about creativity and the 'Creative Economy'. It will look at their definitions, place in curriculum statements, a global effort to raise awareness and involvement in them as part of the Sustainable Development Goals for a better future and a couple of websites for creativity learning. I hope to encourage you to confidently be (more) creative and put (more) creativity into the education you provide.

Creativity

How important do you think creativity is to education, to life? In a 2016 TED Talk, British educator Sir Ken Robinson said, 'Creativity is as important now in education as literacy and we should treat it with the same status.'

In 1992, philosopher and lateral thinker, Edward de Bono argued that 'There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns.'

In 2021, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared that 'Creativity is the industry of tomorrow'. [1] Creativity is critical in future thinking, for managing and solving environmental/existential problems that humans face. Hence its value in education.

Creativity in curriculums

What do you see 'creativity' as? Would your children say something similar? Does it focus on the process and/or skills and/or products? Is it limited to the arts? Or is it underlying many other endeavours?

How does creativity fit into what you teach? For me, it provides fun and individual responses to new concepts or knowledge – at any age. I think that the investment that the learner puts into a creative endeavour helps it 'gel' better.

For example, the art work in the header photo was a home education project by our then seven-year-old son. He has gone on to become a scientist working in this field. While I tend to suggest art-based creativity, there are other skills.

Victorian home educators are only required to include the Eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) in their activities. While, there is no 'creativity' KLA, that doesn't mean it is not there! Clearly it is in the Arts KLA. But isn't writing often creative too? And applying numbers in Maths? What about in discussions in the Humanities? And, Science is often taught in a STEAM context (Science-Technology-English-Arts-Maths)? And soon. Creativity is very much a part of the KLAs - it's integrated in it, not segregated out!

In the Victorian Curriculum, 'creativity' is more explicit, being split into four parts: thinking; expression; endeavour; and collaboration. These are spread across the curriculum. However, 'Thinking' is detailed as part of the 'Critical and Creative Thinking Capability'. [2]

This is linked to the Australian Curriculum, which has a 'Critical and Creative Thinking General Capability', also incorporated throughout the learning areas. [3] Its 'Creative Thinking' definition focuses on these processes:

- 'Learning to generate and apply new ideas in specific contexts,
- seeing existing situations in a new way,
- identifying alternative explanations,
- and seeing or making new links that generate a positive outcome.

This includes:

- combining parts to form something original,
- sifting and refining ideas to discover possibilities,
- constructing theories and objects,
- and acting on intuition.

The products of creative endeavour can involve:

- complex representations and images,
- investigations and performances,
- digital and computer-generated output,
- or occur in virtual reality.' [4]

How important is this to life? A British researcher of creativity for some thirty years, stated that 'Creativity is a fundamental feature of human intelligence in general. It is grounded in everyday capacities such as the association of ideas, reminding, perception, analogical thinking, searching a structured problem-space, and reflecting self-criticism. It involves not only a cognitive dimension (the generation of new ideas) but also motivation and emotion, and is closely linked to cultural context and personality factors.' [5] Creativity is in anything and everything!

Creativity in the economy

Have you and your children heard of the term 'Creative Economy'? (2021 was meant to focus on it.) What would you expect it to include in your environment? What would it include the Arts and Cultural assets and businesses? Would it be important in generating income and employment?

Pre-Covid, 3% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) came from the Creative Economy sector – and it was the greatest employment sector of 18-25 year olds. [6]

In Australia, in 2018, it was even more important at 6% of GDP, covering work in: 'broadcasting, electronic or digital media and film, and archives, design, environmental heritage, fashion, library and archives, literature and print media, museums, music composition and publishing, cultural goods/manufacturing/ and sales, performing arts and supporting activities; visual arts and crafts'. [7]

In 2017, Bekraf, the Indonesian Creative Economy Agency, reported that this sector had 7.4% of its GDP and employed 14% of the workforce. Indonesia aims to become a global leader by 2030 and includes the following industries in this sector [8]:



So, what is the 'Creative Economy'? The UN Conference on Trade and Development says it is:

- 'an evolving concept
- the interplay between human creativity and ideas and intellectual property, knowledge and technology.
- the knowledge-based economic activities upon which the 'creative industries' are based
- an important source of commercial and cultural value
- the sum of all these parts ... including trade, labour and production
- the most dynamic sectors in the world economy [pre-Covid 19]
- new opportunities for ... high growth'. [9]

Is there more to this sector than you and your young people had realised? Is there more available in your local environment - and more as work prospects?



IY Creative Economy for SD

In 2019, Australia signed up for the United Nations 2021 International Year of the Creative Economy for Sustainable Development (IYCESD). Why have an IY on this? 'More than ever, we need creative thinking, innovation and problem-solving to imagine ourselves out of the challenges of inequality and vulnerability that we face daily. The creative industries, the lifeblood of the creative economy, are well placed to help.' [10]

The basic aims of this IY are 'To acknowledge, promote and accelerate the economic and social contributions of the creative economy to the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the Decade of Action.' [11].

But what has happened? This IY has become a casualty of Covid 19, with UNESCO reporting that around the world (not just in Australia) the 'pandemic has paralysed the creative economy.' [12]

Creativity in education

So considering all of this, what are you thinking about creativity's place in the learning you facilitate? Do you already put creativity in to your education provisions? Do you explore the creations of others? Do you offer opportunities to develop creative skills and products? Are you involved in the local Creative Economy? You may already! So perhaps if you and your young people become more aware of creativity's potential and value

in life, that will fulfil an IY aim to 'raise awareness about the importance of investing in creativity'. [13].

Looking for ideas to start or add to what you do to promote creativity? These may be useful:

- de Bono's 'Six thinking hats' [14];
- Munro's 'Creativity in education: What educators need to know' and the Practical Guide that accompanies it [15];
- Online ideas to aid creative learning such as Edsys [16], Canva [17] and LiveTiles [18];

- Be creative! Draw on your own and your young people's ideas for creative actions!

In conclusion, as this second pandemic year passes, may you focus on the creativity you bring to the education you provide to your young people, and delight in the creativity your learners produce. May you celebrate this creativity as an important endeavour in an essential human resource, developing vital skills for the lives and futures of your young people.

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[Direct links to webpages in this article](#)

- [1] <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/international-years/creativeeconomy2021>
- [2] <https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/critical-and-creative-thinking/introduction/learning-in-critical-and-creative-thinking>
- [3] <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/>
- [4] <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/critical-and-creative-thinking/>
- [5] Quote from Prof M. Boden, Uni Sussex, reported in <https://synapticpotential.com/creativity/creativity/>
- [6] <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/international-years/creativeeconomy2021>
- [7] <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2020-10/apo-nid309153.pdf>
- [8] Bekraf, 2017, at <https://theaseanpost.com/article/getting-creative-indonesia>
- [9] <https://unctad.org/topic/trade-analysis/creative-economy-programme>
- [10] M. Henderson, head of Creative Economy Programme of the UNCTAD, 2021, in 'Creative economy to have its year in the sun in 2021' at <https://unctad.org/news/creative-economy-have-its-year-sun-2021>
- [11] UNESCO Roadmap 2021, p2, at https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/creative_economy2021-unesco-roadmap-en-ok2.pdf
- [12] *ibid* [1]
- [13] *ibid* [11] p 4
- [14] one of many summaries available on the web is at <https://mgrush.com/blog/debono-six-thinking-hats/>
- [15] John Munro and the NSW Dept of Ed, 2019, in the 'Education: Future Frontiers Occasional Paper 'Creativity in Education: what educators need to know' and its accompanying 'Practical Guide' both available at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/education-for-a-changing-world/resource-library/creativity-in-education--what-educators-need-to-know> "
- [16] edsys, 2017, Role and importance of creativity in Classroom at <https://www.edsys.in/creativity-in-classroom/>
- [17] Canva '9 clever ways to teach creativity' at <https://www.canva.com/learn/9-clever-ways-to-teach-creativity/>
- [18] LiveTiles "20 student engagement strategies for the Classroom" at <https://livetilesglobal.com/20-clever-ways-teach-creativity-classroom/>