

NURTURING CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Deciding how best to nurture creativity in our schools has become more complicated as interest in creativity has exploded. There are controversial Common Core strictures in many states; at the same time, the classroom has become increasingly digital, making it easier to access information, communicate ideas, and learn from people across the world. Many countries now include cultivating creativity as a national educational policy recommendation, yet there is still debate over best practices. Many well-intentioned educators may be instituting programs that do not reach the desired outcome, and the notion that schools “kill creativity” has become widespread. This belief is both hyperbolic and problematic: it allows us to recognize a problem but not solve it. In this book, an international group of experts in the field addresses these issues, discussing theories and research that focus on how to nurture creativity in both K–12 and college-level classrooms.

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*For Ms. Sheryl VanPelt,
Thank you for inspiring and expecting creativity
from all of your students!
— Ronald A. Beghetto*

*For Zorana Ivcevic Pringle,
Passionate about creativity, schools, and children,
and one of my dearest friends for many years
— James C. Kaufman*

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Preface

Continuing to Nurture Creativity in the Classroom

The first edition of *Nurturing Creativity in the Classroom* was published in 2010. Although less than a decade has passed, much has happened in the worlds of education and creativity. We've seen the Common Core Standards implemented in many states, eliciting emotional reactions both in favor of and against these ideas. The classroom (and world) has become increasingly digital; it is easier than ever to access information, communicate ideas, and learn from people across the world. New voices have emerged and new research and theories have added to the discussion.

We have also seen interest in creativity explode over the past few years. Creativity has become an international educational priority. Many countries have included cultivating creativity in their national educational policy recommendations. This recognition of the importance of creativity has also come with increased concern that many schools are ill-equipped to nurture students' creative potential. In fact, the notion that schools "kill creativity" has become a widespread social meme. We view such beliefs as both hyperbolic and problematic. Although it is true that some educational contexts might suppress students' willingness to take the risks necessary for creativity, schools can't really kill creativity. Indeed, opportunities for supporting creativity are ever-present. Often what is needed is simply recognizing and capitalizing on those opportunities.

The ideas shared in the new addition of this book have the goal of helping educators and researchers nurture creativity in K–12 and college-level classrooms. The chapters in this edition represent a blend of old and new. Some of the chapters are updated from the first edition, some are vastly rewritten, and some are brand-new chapters written expressly for the second edition. We also have four new brief essays to open the book from educators working in the field who have accomplished remarkable feats at incorporating creativity into the classroom. The book concludes with a rewritten coda of both classic and new take-home points.

As we wrote in the first preface, we have dual roles of being professors and fathers. As we have watched Olivia, Jacob, and Asher explore and develop their own creativity, the importance of an educational system that values creativity has become increasingly salient. Our children have an advantage in that their fathers value creativity (perhaps too much!). Like so many other parents, we are committed to providing diverse learning opportunities for our children. However, this commitment is not enough.

Sometimes the well-intended parenting and educational practices backfire or get in the way of supporting creativity. In some cases, more guidance and structure is needed to help young people anchor their originality to the given set of task constraints for a particular activity. In other cases, it may be most helpful to get out of the way and allow young people to express their originality in their own unique way. Striking this balance is an ongoing challenge. There are no simple recipes for how best to accomplish it. One key is recognizing that it is a dynamic process. It is a process that often requires blending timely support and encouragement with guidance and awareness of real-world constraints.

It is our hope that this book inspires educators, parents, and researchers to ensure that all students have an opportunity to find, nurture, and sustain their creative potential. We are excited to present an updated and revised edition of this book. We hope that you will enjoy and draw as much insight and inspiration from these essays as we have.

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