

Creativity

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

Vs. Underachievement

I WILL

- use my talents for good
- see things from more than one perspective
- use principles to solve problems
- learn all I can
- look for new ways to be a person of character

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Approaching a need, a task, or an idea from a new perspective

Creativity is not one of the first character qualities that is named when asked for a list. Creativity is a combination of optimism and determination with a little boldness. Using these qualities together allows you to boldly question assumptions, believe that there is a solution and continue to try and re-try until a problem is solved - creatively.

Creativity is not only about solving problems but how you approach whatever you do. Teachers can be creative in lesson planning, supervisors can be creative in how they manage change, parents can be creative in how they teach values. It is a choice to do something normal in a way that will be remembered better.

Many people think of creativity as a random thought that just pops up but creative people prepare to be creative. They are usually avid readers and have various interests. They are always open to new ideas and usually ask lots of questions. In some cases, creativity is applying knowledge from one area to another. In others, it is just breaking something down into its components and applying known principles to replace the pieces with something fun or funny.

This month, think outside the box to find a creative solution to a problem that plagues you regularly.



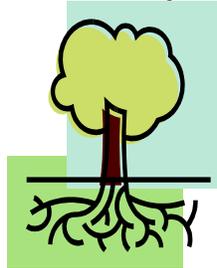
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No Matter How You Say It

↻ ↻ Go to the Root ↻ ↻

The word *create* is found in Late Middle English (in the sense 'form out of nothing', used of a divine or supernatural being): from Latin *creat* 'produced', from the verb *creare*. Can you see how creativity brings something into existence?



kreativität - German

kreativás - Hungarian

créativité - French

creatividad - Spanish

Sign Language

Check out the following website for the American Sign Language interpretation of

Creative <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=510>

Indifferent <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=7064> second definitionn

Can you see how creative is coming out of the mind and results in action and indifferent is merely lip service?

From Miriam Webster (www.merriam-webster.com)

Creativity

Synonyms

clever, imaginative, ingenious, innovative, inventive, original, originative

Words Related to creative

gifted, inspired, talented, resourceful, fecund, fertile, fruitful, generative, germinal, productive, prolific

Antonyms

uncreative, unimaginative, uninventive, unoriginal

“People will accept your idea much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first.” -David H. Comins

Character Quotables

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

Pablo Picasso

“No artist is ahead of his time. He is his time. It is just that others are behind the time.”

Martha Graham

“Creativeness often consists of merely turning up what is already there. Did you know that right and left shoes were thought up only a little more than a century ago?”

Bernice Fitz-Gibbon

“Imagination rules the world.”

Napoleon

“Throwing away ideas too soon is like opening a package of flower seeds and then throwing them away because they're not pretty.”

Arthur VanGundy, Ph.D.

“To be successful we must live from our imaginations, not from our memories.”

Steven Covey

“A hunch is creativity trying to tell you something.”

Frank Capra

“Creativity is allowing oneself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.”

Scott Adams

“Genius is one percent inspiration, and ninety-nine percent perspiration. I make more mistakes than anyone else I know, and sooner or later, I patent most of them.”

Thomas Edison

“Reason can answer questions, but imagination has to ask them.”

Ralph Gerard

“There is a fountain of youth: it is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of the people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will have truly defeated age.”

Sophia Loren

“Creativity belongs to the artist in each of us. To create means to relate. The root meaning of the word art is “to fit together” and we all do this every day. Not all of us are painters but we are all artists. Each time we fit things together we are creating - whether it is to make a loaf of bread, a child, a day.”

Corita Kent

“There is a correlation between the creative and the screwball. So we must suffer the screwball gladly.”

Kingman Brewster

“Nobody is bored when he is trying to make something that is beautiful, or to discover something that is true.”

William Inge

Curriculum Connection



Science

The tangelo is a citrus fruit that is a hybrid of a tangerine and either a pomelo or a grapefruit. Hybrid plants are created when two different plants are bred together to create something new and different. Sometimes this is done to create a stronger variety such as disease-resistant corn. Other reasons include pleasure as seen in flower varieties. Challenge your students to discover the origin of peppermint.



Leonardo da Vinci - Model of Creativity

Leonardo da Vinci was a scientist, engineer, artist, instrument inventor, anatomist, philosopher, and composer. He embraced all types of learning and he didn't differentiate between disciplines because he believed that they were all inter-related. He believed that the learning and discoveries made in one area affect your understanding and knowledge of another subject of study. He also believed that true creative intelligence comes with the development of all your intelligences.

Da Vinci employed many techniques to get in

touch with his creative genius. He would paint with both hands, he would practice writing backwards, he looked for images in the ashes of his fireplace and he used a notebook to record his thoughts, ideas and observations using both words and sketches. For creative thinkers everywhere, da Vinci is a hero and awe-inspiring role model.



Leonardo da Vinci left us a code of four principles to stimulate and encourage creative genius:

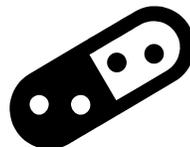
1. Study the science of art.
2. Study the art of science.
3. Develop all your senses especially your ability to see.
4. Study all the above in the light of the idea that everything connects, in some way, to everything else.

Team~Building Activity

Building a culture of good character requires building the class into a community. Here is this month's teambuilding activity:

Time Capsule

Each student should start with a blank piece of paper and crayons and markers. Each student should draw pictures of things that they would want to put in a time capsule that would explain who they are. (You may need to explain that a time capsule is something you bury for future generations to find that explain what life is like now.) They should consider things they like to do, favorite possessions, sports. What ever they draw needs to represent an item that they could put in a time capsule. Drawing a picture of their family is not something that could go in a time capsule unless it is a photograph and drawn as such. When they are all finished, divide the students into small groups and let them share their time capsule with each other. When they have all shared, ask if anyone learned anything new about a classmate. How many had similar items in their time capsule? How many had unique things? Our differences and our similarities are what builds the unique community of the classroom.



Brainteasers

Brainteasers are a great test of one's ability to let go of paradigms that can restrict your thinking. Brainteasers can be verbal or visual. Some examples are below:

Palindromes

A palindrome is a word, phrase, verse, or sentence that reads the same backward or forward. Did you know that SWIMS reads the same way upside down?

Visit www.palindromelist.net/ for more palindromes.

Riddles

A question in which the answer is usually a play on words, contains a double meaning or is a trick question. Mary's father has 5 daughters – Nana, Nene, Nini, Nono. What is the fifth daughters name? *If you answered Nunu, you are wrong. It's Mary!*

Visit www.riddles.com/ for more riddles.

Optical Illusions

Pictures that the brain can perceive in different ways. Rubin's vase can be seen as a vase or two faces looking at each other.



Visit brainden.com/optical-illusions.htm for more illusions.

Logic Puzzles

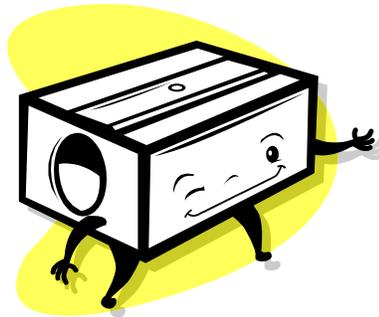
Logic Puzzles can be a simple question with a single answer or it can be a grid-type question where you are given several facts and asked to deduce a single answer or a pairing of answers. Anne, Olivia and Jenita are daughters of Mr.Jack, Mr.Brown and Mr.Ran. Four of these people are playing badminton doubles. Mr.Rans daughter and Mr.Jack are partners. Annes father and Mr.Browns daughter are also partners. There are not any father-daughter combinations. Who is Anne's father? *As there are not any father-daughter combinations, Mr.Brown is not Anne's father. Anne can play with Mr.Jack, so he cannot be her father. Therefore, Mr.Ran is Anne's father.*

Visit brainden.com/logic-puzzles.htm for more logic puzzles.

There are many types of brainteaser puzzles. Choose some that are appropriate for your classroom. Divide the students into groups and let them work on these together. The grid type logic puzzles work best for this but you can choose whatever you want. When they are done, let each group share their puzzle and answer with the class. When it is over explain that by challenging your brain to think in different ways, you can train your brain to think creatively when trying to solve the puzzles that life throws your way. Be sensitive to those who may have struggled with the puzzles. Explain that everyone has puzzle types that they are good at and those that stump them. If you didn't understand how to solve the puzzle you were assigned does not mean that you are dumb. It may mean that other puzzles are more your type. The more of this type of puzzle that you work, the easier it will be to begin thinking like this.

Tom Swifties

Tom Swifties are fun to create. They are a sentence in which an adverb relates both properly and “punningly” to a sentence of reported speech. An example: “I feel like I’ve been run over by a car!” Tom said flatly. Or “I need a pencil sharpener,” Tom said bluntly. There are actually many forms of Tom Swifties but this form is the easiest to copy. Come up with several of your own, perhaps using current vocabulary words, and then let the students come up with some on their own either individually or in groups. It helps sometimes to have them start by thinking of adverbs first and then creating their Tom Swifty around it. (This is a good time for lessons on adverbs and punctuation for quoted speech.) After your students have created some, write them on the board or post them on the bulletin board. This is the type of assignment that tends to stick with kids and days later they will be bringing you more Tom Swifties.



Limiting Creativity

Sometimes when you give an assignment, you leave the boundaries wide open expecting to get really creative results. Normally students will choose something they have done before or are familiar with. If you want to really make it creative, limit what they can use or do and force creativity to happen within strict boundaries. For example, you may give an assignment to write a short story but give them 16 words they must use, or give them the first paragraph and they need to write the ending. If you choose to use art as the assignment, you may want to restrict them to only drawing straight lines, or let each student randomly choose 2 colors (before giving them the assignment) and that is all they can use. For a history lesson, have them write a scene from history using real characters but give them a setting which was not in the books. How would each act according to what you know about them. When they have finished, ask the students to think back on how they processed the limits in their mind. What steps did they take to find links? Would they have thought to do it this way if the exercise hadn't called for it? Thinking in this way strengthens creative thinking skills.



Crayons! Crayons! Crayons! Crayons!

Color Outside the Lines!

Challenge your students to create a picture using crayons, colored pencils or markers. The only rule is they cannot color inside of their picture. They may only color around it so that the blank space in the middle actually defines the picture. The background can be solid colors, stripes, dots or whatever they wish it to be. To visualize a completed assignment, picture the shape of a heart where the heart is blank and the rest of the page is colored completely red (or a variety of colors). For younger students you may want to get a First Coloring Book with simple line drawings and give a page to each student. The same challenge exists – they can not color inside the lines. For much older students you may want to give them the item or a scene to draw so that it is more complicated. Examples would be two children tossing a ball, or a cloud raining on a flower. You can come up with one for each student or a single one for the class and compare the different interpretations.



Reuse Those Old Crayons!

According to a Crayola's FAQs on their website, Crayola makes 3 billion crayons a year. That makes for a boatload of used and broken crayons! Why not challenge your students to come up with Creative ways to give new life to crayons? They can be melted down into new shapes and new colors, used to make wax paper mosaics, batiking, candle coloring and fire starters. Host a contest at your school to find creative ways to use crayons.

Here are a few websites with ideas to get you started:

www.crazycrayons.com/recycle_program.html

frugalliving.about.com/od/frugalfun/ht/Make_Crayons.htm

www.thriftyfun.com/tf666289.tip.html

www.crayola.com/crafts/

Are there other items that could be treated like this? Think creatively!

Did you know you can recycle markers, also?

See www.crayola.com/colorcycle.aspx for instructions on how to collect and ship back for FREE!

Just before his inauguration, President-elect John F. Kennedy spoke to the Massachusetts legislature and offered this Biblical quote: "For of those to whom much is given, much is required." One can imagine that a powerful politician, let alone a Kennedy, might sometimes need to remind himself and others that the rich and powerful were not merely supposed to enjoy their privilege but might choose to give something back, as they say. This idea has always held great power for me. But, with my often juvenile view of things, I tend to seek my philosophical guidelines, not so much from politics as from comics. Thus, my comic book version of this philosophy comes from Spider-Man's Uncle Ben, who says, "Remember, with great power, comes great responsibility."

Croskey's Corner

The Character Quality of the Month, Creativity, is defined as "Approaching a need, a task, or an idea from a new perspective." That is one of the *Character First!* definitions which coincides with our general understanding of Creativity. As is common with me, I find the "I will..." statements very illuminating. One in particular caught my eye: I will... "Use my talents for good." In other words, Spider-Man's Uncle Ben's was admonishing him to use his super powers to help others.

The comics are full of characters who made the choice to use their great powers for good. Superman is a "strange visitor from another planet, who came to Earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men." Yet his Earthly parents, Ma and Pa Kent, teach him to channel those powers to help others. One story has a dying Pa Kent telling him, "No man on Earth has the amazing powers you have. You can use them to be a powerful force for good." So Superman, who can squeeze coal into diamonds, instead decides to save the world from disasters. Bruce Wayne sees his parents gunned down by a cheap hood. (Good to know that it was not done by an expensive hood.) Many boys might become juvenile delinquents or turn to drugs. But Bruce decides to dedicate his life to fighting crime. Since criminals are a superstitious, cowardly lot, he determines to dress as a mysterious figure of the night, and Batman is created. Wonder Woman, an Amazon princess, leaves the safety of Paradise Island and the promise of immortality to join "Men's World" and to help them defeat evildoers. The character Green Lantern's ring is a virtual Aladdin's Lamp, that can create any object he wills it to. So what does he do - create vast treasure? No, he hits criminals with green boxing gloves! Indeed, many of the comic book super heroes are rich playboys or playgirls who have the dedication (and the free time allowed when one does not have to work!) to plow their fortunes into righting wrongs. The hero could make himself or herself rich or ruler of the world or both. Instead, the heroic path is to do good and to help others.

All well and good, you might say. But that's comic books. What about reality? There is no doubt that, at least at times, our culture seems to admire and encourage the development and possession of great power and wealth. But the choosing to do good deeds with the great power often seems absent. Many of the athletes, musicians, actors, and media stars we worship seem to glory in the power but not in the honor. However, maybe our appreciation for a hero "matures" when we see them perform service and give back. Take Bill Gates. He was certainly admired, if not worshipped, for his accumulation of wealth through his development of Microsoft's technological monopoly. Yet today, he and his wife's foundation takes the spotlight, especially when they devote funding and hard work to improving education. Even former Presidents Carter, Bush I and II, and Clinton draw crowds for their work in Haiti, in Africa, and with international efforts to promote peace and democracy. We may have a passionate fling with wealth and power, but we seem to "marry" the celebrities who do good deeds.

The challenge for schools is to change the culture from one that worships power to one that is devoted to using power to help others. Or, changing the culture from "Might makes right" to "Might for right." We can help young people to gravitate to media stars and celebrities who do good work. It may come through history class, where we study not just famous people but also famous good people. If Andy Warhol's concept of 15 minutes of fame still attracts kids today, then we have to show them the famous do-gooders as models. Helen Keller. Mother Teresa. The same is true for those our schools invite to inspire kids. Students need to meet the Tom Gills, who are well known but also well respected; the Marvin Lewises who set up charitable foundations; the Kim Nuxhalls who carry on the campaigns for character in the names of their beloved fathers. And we can stand up for heroic giving back in every day assignments. I know a teacher who will only let her students choose biographical subjects for their One Person Shows if the choice has had a positive impact on the world. Why not? History needs to study the villains, as well as the heroes. But kids need not rehearse being these villains.

In an old Superman story, his enemy, Lex Luthor, feeds a bunch of data into a computer, asks the machine to figure out Superman's secret identity, and gets the answer: Clark Kent. Luthor fires the computer programmer for failing. Why? Luthor reasons that no person with the great powers of Superman would ever pretend to be a weak human being.

Yet that is the glorious thing about true heroes. They have great power but they choose to curb their own passions and desires and to help others. I think that is what we mean by "heroic." Let's pass the word to our students.

Bill Croskey is a retired school psychologist from the Loveland City Schools

For the Family

We are studying the character quality of **Creativity**: Approaching a need, a task, or an idea from a new perspective

To practice Creativity I will:

- use my talents for good
- see things from more than one perspective
- use principles to solve problems
- learn all I can
- look for new ways to be a person of character



Family Activity:

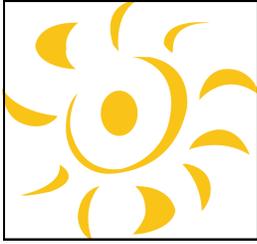
Creative Lunch

Schedule a lunch meal when the family can have a meal that will be memorable. You can serve foods and eat them with a different utensil such as forks for soup. Serve hot dogs and eat them with corn skewers instead of a bun. See who can eat the most of the hotdog and still have it held together with the skewers. Have open face Peanut Butter sandwiches and provide all kinds of goodies for making a face on the sandwich such as raisins, mini-marshmallows, cheese curls, or whatever they can think of. When the meal is over, talk about the importance of creativity when approaching a task, a need or a problem. Brainstorm some of the problems that the family faces on a routine basis - sharing a bathroom, getting out the door on time, chores, etc. Can you come up with some creative solutions to these problems? Brushing teeth in the kitchen, create a “launch pad” by the door so everyone has a place to stage everything for the morning, etc.



Other ways to teach character in the home:

- Display the character quality and definition in a prominent place such as on the refrigerator or let each child decorate it for their bedroom door.
- At the dinner table ask if anyone noticed anyone (not just family members) demonstrating the character quality (or not demonstrating it).
- Point out news stories where character was or was not involved.
- Review the “I wills” and see if there are specific actions you can add to this list.
- During car trips, challenge the kids by describing scenarios and having them identify if it describes being the quality or being the opposite.
- Praise with character by recognizing the character quality involved rather than the achievement.
- For more ideas visit www.charactercincinnati.org/education.php



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Character...It Starts With Me!

Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the previous activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.