Bettering Creative Thought in Young Students

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Abstract

An exploration of existing exercises, activities, environmental structures which allow for and encourage creative thought and expression. These are then followed by a lesson plan which includes ideas and concepts on how to foster both creativity and the thought processes which it affects including problem solving, critical thinking, empathy and bettered personal ethics. The results seek to not only highlight the importance of creativity both in the classroom and within the home but also how it can affect positively, at large, both the individual and society.

Keywords

Creativity, Children, Instruction, Empathy, Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving, Ethics

1. Introduction

A study of the practice of activities which would impact one's environment and how that might contribute to better creative thinking. We look at both present and potential future areas for innovation which would honor the individual in addition to possibly contributing to the community. Author and educator Sir Ken Robinson stated that "Raising academic standards alone will not solve the problems we face. To move forward we need a fresh understanding of intelligence, of human capacity and of the nature of creativity." (Leggett, 2017) In agreement with such, we investigate the above with the hopes of understanding how creative thought and its connecting forms of thought processes, fostered through exercises, activities and an adequate environment might bring about potential positive consequences on human behavior thus bettering the individual and aiding them to positively contribute to society.

2. Essential Defining Elements of Research

2.1. What Is Creativity

Creative thought is the consideration of alternative possibilities, the ability to look at varying perspectives with fresh eyes and then the possibility to use these varying outlooks and ideas in order to come up with something truly unique (Dere, 2019). It is a mixture of curiosity and then exploration which finally results in discovery. The mind finds conclusions and new varying outlooks which are innovative, novel and original (Noorkholisoh, 2021). The thought process is divergent and exhibits fluency and flexibility which allows us to make connections, produce many solutions, change perspective and explore varying ideas (Dere, 2019).

Creative ability is often described as being the ability to come up with concrete outcomes which are both original and useful (Stevenson et al., 2021). Scholar Hans Jürgen Eysenck defined creative ability to be a mixture of personality, environment and cognitive ability including intelligence and knowledge (Stevenson et al., 2021). In the case of "A Minimal Theory of Creative Ability" (MTCA), a theory based on differential psychology used to test and understand the "*nature, magnitude causes and consequences of psychological differences between individuals and the general population.*" (Stevenson et al., 2021), creative ability is a relationship consisting of both intelligence and expertise (Stevenson et al., 2021).

2.2. Why Is Creativity Important

Creativity is not just a means for personal and individual expression, a way of admiring and showcasing beauty and the spreading of important and valuable messages; it can also consist of problem solving (Keen, 2011) and solution finding for the world's greatest and most complex problems, enhance critical thinking skills (Bailin, 1987) thus increasing comprehension and increase empathy (Decety & Cowell, 2014) which in turn can lead to positive and better ethical behavior (Haney, 1994).

2.3. Why Young Children

During early childhood the brain is still in the midst of wiring (Leggett, 2017). This would then be an important time to begin exercises and activities which enhance creative thought. Young children, predominately between the ages of four to six years of age, are more creative and willing to partake in creative activity and expression due to not having entered yet a given educational structure and oblivion to peer reaction and cultural norm (Leggett, 2017). Every child possesses a form of creative ability (Noorkholisoh, 2021) and early childhood, in terms of both development and neurology, is a prime time to lay down the foundations for creative thought and action.

3. Identifying Activities and Procedures for Creative Enhancement

This section explores various techniques, exercises and activities which are being

used presently in order to foster creative thought in young children. We not only look at positive practices but also the learning environments which promote and encourage creative thought in young children. We argue that these varying factors all play a crucial role in the child's creative thinking, creative practice and creative development.

3.1. Creating a Creativity Friendly Environment

Creativity is considered to be one of the highest forms of thinking. In order for children to become more creative and develop creativity throughout their childhood the environment is of utmost importance (Pugsley & Acar, 2018). It has been shown that parents who encourage creativity at home will in turn have more creative children (Pugsley & Acar, 2018). This would consist of encouraging imagination, play, divergent thinking and problem-solving (Pugsley & Acar, 2018). To do so parents might opt for a free yet structured environment. They should keep in mind that a highly creative person tends to possess "independence, autonomy, freedom, authenticity, and questioning structure and authority" as personality traits (Pugsley & Acar, 2018). Because of this need a parent may try to implement "conformity and compliance" which to facilitate parenting and can lead their child to engage in more socially acceptable behavior (Pugsley & Acar, 2018). Research found six fundamental principles which may be adopted in order to both parent and raise creative individuals: "trust, respect, support, enjoyment, protection, and role modelling." (Pugsley & Acar, 2018). While these fundamental principles may work in order to develop creativity, many parents prefer obedience over independence, especially in low-income households and educational structures which are rigid and overly standardized.

Educational institutions may also prefer to spend the majority of their funding on subjects such reading and mathematics instead of subjects attached to the arts (Ershadi & Winner, 2020). Parenting is considered to be the primary and most important social relationship with which an individual will be presented (Dong et al., 2022). Parenting style has a large impact upon a child's "emotional, cognitive and behavioral development." (Dong et al., 2022). Positive parenting, which is described as "supportive, warm, understanding and encourages autonomy," results in better creative potential; as opposed to high pressure, sever punishment, "parental indulgence and excessive parental control." (Dong et al., 2022). Research has found that understanding, trusting and encouraging environments and family dynamics results in more creative potential and self-confident children than households which overcontrol and practice sever and frequent punishment (Dong et al., 2022). Based on the aforementioned research, this research argues that the child's home environment plays an equally important role as the child's educational environment in the child's creative development.

3.2. Nurturing Creativity through Play

Play is considered to be an important component in the creative development of

pre-schoolers. "The Creative Curriculum For Pre-School, Fifth Edition" by Diane Trister Dodge et al. states that the environment in which you choose to teach creativity is extremely important for an effective impact on the children (Dodge et al., 2014). The learning space needs to be well organized which is made evident if the child behaves in a number of pre-determined ways. This includes the child being able to take action on their own such as choosing independently activities of personal preference, using the given materials both appropriately and creatively, staying focused and involved for a long period of time on a given activity, learning from the various activities in meaningful ways and finally the ability and desire to take care of all the activities materials (Dodge et al., 2014). It is additionally important to possess uplifting attitudes and to create a warm and friendly atmosphere for better and again more positive creative outcomes and participation (Dodge et al., 2014). One can do so by stating belonging, enhancing trust, embracing authenticity, encouraging independence and autonomy and finally making sure the environment is both comfortable and safe (Dodge et al., 2014).

4. Examples of Activities Which Forster Creativity

Below are a series of activities which foster creativity in a diversity of ways. Each activity has been tested on young children proven to better creative thought and action.

4.1. Guided Picture Book Reading

We firstly explore how the reading of picture books, to kindergarteners, might enhance creative thinking and artistry (Hsiao, 2010). It has been proven that picture books are one of the best teaching methods, for young children, in kindergarten settings (Hsiao, 2010). Scholar Ching-Yuan Hsiao created various techniques, activities and exercises in order to test the above stated theory. This method, he believes, could lead to various forms of thought, analysis and critique by which he believes will promote "impression," "expression," and "commitment." "Impression" leads to describing what the child sees upon first glance, "expression", means that by which the students explore the various emotional and physical elements they are presented with and then "commitment" involves children being able to come up with personal conclusions and judgements regarding the illustrations and book (Hsiao, 2010). Hsiao conducted several studies in Taiwan with the goal of enhancing creative thought and artistry, these were titled "descriptive," "analytical," "interpretation," "atmosphere" and "picture book tracing." In the "descriptive" exercises the children were asked to identify various themes and details within the picture book illustrations, in the "analytical" exercises the children were asked to point out various visual elements (Hsiao, 2010), in the "interpretation" exercises, the children were called to discuss amongst each other the various prior discussed elements of the book (Hsiao, 2010). Finally during the "atmosphere" exercises the children were led to describe and

understand the atmosphere of each page in regards to the artwork (Hsiao, 2010). All of these exercises proved to enhance artistry (Hsiao, 2010). The children added color, shape and lines to their illustrations (Hsiao, 2010). They were more aware of and practiced better technique (Hsiao, 2010). They were more "careful and thoughtful" when drawing (Hsiao, 2010). And finally the children brought the new found knowledge and desire to continue creations in to their homes (Hsiao, 2010). Ching-Yuan Hsiao additionally encouraged putting the children's art work on display so that the children may visit and then revisit the art work in order to enhance reflection and discussion not only on the work but also as a form of practice for future artistic and creative engagement (Hsiao, 2010).

4.2. Museum Visits

Museum visits are becoming increasingly popular as they are deemed to be of high learning value (Gong et al., 2020). There are various forms of museums. One type of museum that is becoming increasingly popular are children's museums, which are aimed primarily at children and "are experienced based and interactive." (Gong et al., 2020). There are over 300 children's museums worldwide (Gong et al., 2020). They are designed to enhance childhood creativity with play, exploration and freedom of expression (Gong et al., 2020). The children are encouraged to choose their area of interest and the museums promote hands on experiences and interactive learning which, upon research, leads to independent enhanced interest in learning along with an amplified imagination and sense of artistry (Gong et al., 2020).

4.3. Group Play

Another practice which may enhance creativity is group play (Rizi et al., 2011). According to research, playing games can present the opportunity for the enhancement of learning, education and creative practice (Rizi et al., 2011). Games can greatly aid in the encouragement of imagination, independency, self-esteem, self-confidence, critical thinking and creativity. That these elements might not only increase the before stated positive traits but can also cater to childhood "needs, interests and capabilities." (Rizi et al., 2011).

4.4. Drama

Drama can significantly increase creativity in young children (Momeni et al., 2017). Drama is a very positive exercise as it does this while not necessitating many or any tools and large or complex facilities (Momeni et al., 2017). It's a form of activity, through acting, which allows children to freely express, their "needs, desires and thoughts" with improvisation and free form narration (Momeni et al., 2017). Research has shown that creative drama improves "communicational skills, social change," "spiritual moral codes, and self-knowledge." (Momeni et al., 2017). Creative drama has an impact on a child's "reading and writing skills, social skills and artistic skills." A standard creative drama exercise

consists of warming up with simple physical exercises, individual pantomimes, group pantomimes, storytelling, choosing scenes and stories to act out, the acting out of plays and finally the writing of one's own story and/or play (Momeni et al., 2017).

4.5. Music

According to research conducted by Dr. Jan Dogan music helps develop a child's intellectual and creative abilities (Dogan, 2002). The children's orchestra Nikolai Metlov created a system where they taught pre-schoolers to play various instruments such as circles, triangles, bells, castanets and later xylophones and metallophones (Dogan, 2002). Not only does the learning and then the playing of musical instruments help develop qualities such as endurance, perseverance, purposefulness, tolerance, better memory and concentration (Dogan, 2002) but can additionally allow one to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences openly (Dogan, 2002) and authentically free from intellectual tension.

4.6. Doodle Books

Several programs were developed in order to foster creativity in young children such as the doodle-book program. Firstly the doodle book program consists of completing an incomplete drawing with one's own perception and idea (Dziedziewicz et al., 2013). The child is to be asked to complete the drawing with as many different drawings, solutions and ideas as possible. This activity is created to increase the child's divergent thought abilities under the guidance of a teacher or parental figure (Dziedziewicz et al., 2013). After research, the doodle book is not considered to be the most effective tool in the enhancement of creativity in young children between the ages of four and six (Dziedziewicz et al., 2013). That being said it is an easy and helpful activity which does increase creative thought and ability (Dziedziewicz et al., 2013).

4.7. Movement Program

The movement program, is the promotion and encouragement of creative practice through bodily movement (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). This can be done with music, dance, drama, stories and plays (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). A divergent creative movement is described as being a behavioral movement which diverges from accepted behavior patterns (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). This results in creative behavior which is a combination of new experimental movements and discoveries along with pre-existing behavior (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). This not only increases creative ability but also bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). An example of a creative movement exercise might consist of leading the children in creative movement instruction and play (e.g.: act like a plant, act like the ocean, act like Christmas, etc.) and then end with a series of questions regarding the children's thoughts and feelings regarding the activity (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). Research has shown, that these activities not only enhance crea-

tivity but also enable and exercise the ability to learn and develop many differing perspectives which will result in heightened creative ability (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). It is important to remember ethics when encouraging and practicing creative drama in order to install benevolent environments and creations (Alper & Ulutas, 2022). Creative drama can also create a firmer sense of awareness and understanding of otherness as the child plays different roles as very different individuals from oneself (Alper & Ulutas, 2022).

4.8. Mathematics

Writing in pre-school can cause difficulties as the children are not yet accustomed to the meaning and sound behind words and letters (Worthington, 2006). Mathematics is also a language consisting of foreign numbers and signs. Scholar Maulfry Worthington suggests that creativity can be enhanced along with mathematics resulting in better creative problem solving skills (Worthington, 2006). In order to do so children can be encouraged to draw numbers on a piece of paper (Worthington, 2006). This is believed to enhance understanding of numbers and lay down a firm foundation in order to start exploring calculations. After research Worthington found that, "in *communication*, *language* and *literacy*, personal writing systems, marks children make and the meanings they give them and marks signs and symbols are all highlighted. A very important statement is that children ascribe meanings to marks. These statements are also important for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Communication and using spoken and written language are key aspects for children's learning about mathematics." (Worthington, 2006)

5. The Implications of Creative Thought on the Young Child's Ability to Problem Solve, Critically Think, Empathize and on Their Ethical Behavior

Starting from a very young age, in order to adapt to their surrounding community, children learn to critically analyze and evaluate the various options and consequences of choice and action that they are presented with (Keen, 2011). In order to fit into and adapt to the given system, one must critically think and problem-solve. These findings argue that the more knowledge a child is exposed to the better their ability to produce original and novel ideas will become. This can consist of academic standard subjects such as the sciences, the arts, languages and mathematics along with the ability to authentically and personally make conclusions and express opinions. The more knowledge a child is exposed to, the better their ability to reassemble and combine ideas, as they will have access to an increased amount of divers information allowing for both original and novel concepts (Keen, 2011).

5.1. Creativity and Problem Solving

According to authors Thomas B. Ward, Steven M. Smith, and Jyotsma Vaid's book "Conceptual Structures and Processes in Creative Thought", creativity can

lead to new advancements and innovation within given subjects and professions, a diversity of outlook and contribution to research and artistry, problem solving and solution finding in regards to societal, social and environmental dilemmas along with laying down the thought ground work towards the ability to build and change of one's personal ideology (Ward et al., 1997):

"Humans are prodigious builders of cognitive structures. Out of an ongoing stream of discrete experiences we construct a vast array of concepts that bridge the gaps between otherwise separate events and give coherence to our world. When we form these new concepts, or modify or extend old ones presumably we create new cognitive entities that did not exist prior to those activities. In addition, because these concepts serve the purposes of understanding, organizing, classifying, and communicating about the world, they also satisfy another criterion of creativity, namely, usefulness. Hence, at its core or essence, the continual growth of categorical and conceptual knowledge is in itself a creative phenomenon." (Ward et al., 1997)

According to scholars Michael D. Mumford et al. problem-solving is the combining and reorganizing of various ideas and concepts (Mumford et al., 1993). It has been found that many of the greatest contributions to the arts and sciences were derived from the mixing of two or more different ideas and concepts (Mumford et al., 1993). In order to combine various concepts, one has to be exposed to differing knowledge and information. Exposure alone does not suffice in generating novel solutions, one must gain a firm understanding of the new and different concept (Mumford et al., 1993). There are various different steps and applications in order to better one's problem-solving and in particular one's creative problem-solving skills. These skills include "problem construction or problem finding, information encoding and category search, idea evaluation, planning and implementation and solution monitoring" (Mumford et al., 1993) All of which have an effect on creativity. It has been found that an environment which fosters independent learning and values unique, new ideas and contributions would greatly help and increase creative problem solving (Mumford et al., 1993). That the more the individual is exposed to, researches and tries to comprehend in regards to the various angles and complexities of the given problem the better the solutions will be.

Scholar Rachel Keen argues that problem solving is not only essential towards creative thought and application but is a key thought process and ability which contributes towards societal innovation, progress and survival (Keen, 2011). Problem solving not only necessitates finding solutions but also the ability to project one's self into the future (Keen, 2011). This would lead to the developing of a comfort and increased ability with attempting to predict and anticipate future problems before they come firmly into existence. She further states that there are various categories of mistakes one can make when creating a conclusion and making decisions which could contribute to societal collapse. These categories include non-anticipation, non-awareness and prediction of future prob-

lems, non-recognition of existing problems and failed solutions. Her research found that future oriented thinking can be taught to children, as early as pre-school, with playful and exploratory learning which leads to heightened flexible and creative ability (Keen, 2011).

5.2. Creativity and Critical Thought

Along with problem solving, critical thought is another principle component of the creative process. Scholars Michael Scriven and Richard Paul define critical thought as:

> "Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to belief and action." (University of Louisville, 2024)

According to Sharon Bailin critical thought is the ability to come to personal judgements and conclusions within a given "frame work or context," (Bailin, 1987) yet for Bailin, creativity calls for rule breaking and "transcending of the framework itself." (Bailin, 1987) Critical thought and creative thought are two different modes of thought, that she argues are in fact joint (Bailin, 1987). She describes critical thinking as being analytical, which means that it consists of arriving at judgments, within a set framework, set of rules, logic, research and reasoning (Bailin, 1987). Whereas creative thought transcends set systems, with divergent thought, imagination, rule breaking, intuition and suspended judgment (Bailin, 1987). These two different thought processes are necessary and come into play with innovation, invention, creative production, the identification of assumptions, generation and construction of counter arguments and the creation of a personal ideology.

5.3. Creativity and Empathy

The key components of critical thought and their link to creativity, can lead one to wonder if fostering these abilities might result in gaining empathy? Empathy is the ability to understand the feelings, experiences, and other forms of otherness, of another. According to scholars Jason Decety and Jason M. Cowell, humans are unique in the learning and understand someone else's perspective, that with the learning from a differing perspective, they may start to empathize with those outside of their family and tribe towards other sub groups and possibly towards the whole of humanity (Decety & Cowell, 2014). In this way learning differing perspectives might provoke care and concern which might help diminish stereotypes and then result in positive feelings towards the given difference and those who possess it (Decety & Cowell, 2014). Decety and Cowell suggest that the reading of fiction which possesses differing perspectives and the engaging in differing forms of media, arts and culture might provoke positive outward thinking emotions and, as a result, lead to an increase in positive morality

(Decety & Cowell, 2014).

5.4. Creativity and Ethics

Scholar Sarah Songhorian argues that empathy has long been connected to positive morality as it consists of the ability to understand, care for and share the emotions of another (Songhorian, 2019). While a person may be able to feel empathy for a given individual without any given knowledge of their situation, a firm understanding and information regarding the difference and person does help in the development of a moral conscience and moral ability (Songhorian, 2019). One can feel empathy for a person's pain but positive morality may lead one to care and the helping of the given person in need (Songhorian, 2019). Empathy though is biased and while one can hope that the given understanding can lead to better moral character it can also lead to immoral choices (Songhorian, 2019). That being said, empathy contributes greatly to ethics but is not sufficient enough for good moral behavior (Songhorian, 2019).

Finally, in agreement, scholar Kathleen M. Haney argues that empathy is essential to ethical thinking (Haney, 1994). That in order to serve a community outside of oneself, one must be able and willing to understand the perspectives of another (Haney, 1994). Her argument is as follows: "*Empathy is a means to knowledge of the human nature; knowledge of the human nature enlivens and encourages empathy. On such a basis, ethics is possible.*" (Haney, 1994)

This research argues that empathy should be fostered as a communication process in the early years of childhood which scholar Carol M. Davis believes will become more concrete as the child matures (Davis, 1990). Her ideas are that as the individual matures they will start to see similarities as opposed to differences which could result in better ethical behavior. She argues that individuals who are more creative and possess stronger curiosity of others might have heightened capability towards the development of feeling one with the whole of humanity (Davis, 1990). This research argues that the younger the child is exposed to difference along with a positive outward thinking value system the better the child's perceptions and ideology regarding openness and acceptance will become.

6. Nurturing Problem-Solving, Critical Thinking, Empathy and Ethical Behavior

This section explores how concepts and ideas, in regards to the varying thought processes, can be applied in various activities and exercises with young children. These activities and exercises can consist of the prior stated situations in the beginning of the chapter and new found activities and encouragement of divers yet creative thought.

6.1. The Environment, Personal Choice and Autonomy

Firstly creativity is commonly described as being original, novel and useful (Noorkholisoh, 2021). In order to obtain these results one cannot just instruct creativ-

ity but needs to create opportunities and an environment which nurture creativity through exploration and experience (Nilson et al., 2013). A child cannot become creative through instruction (Smith, 1996). This section suggests an environment, the adult's attitudes and behavior towards creative thought and expression along with adapted activities and exercises will influence and better a young child's creative abilities (Smith, 1996). In this environment both common sense and respect are necessary in order to foster creativity in a safe and benevolent manner (Smith, 1996). Children should not be permitted to belittle nor mock their peers in order to allow encouraging and free exchange (Smith, 1996). The adult's attitudes, trust and autonomy is very important in bettering the creative practice. Meaning they need to allow children to choose the activities which are aligned with their individual interests which will enhance their interest in learning, thus resulting in better creative practice (Smith, 1996). Not imposing a finish time but allowing the child to continue the project at a later date which might enhance creative work and thought flow along with encourage trust and independent decision-making in regards to when is the best time to end and turn in the given project (Smith, 1996). Proposing exercises based on children's primary interests will best foster their creativity (Smith, 1996).

Scholar Eleni Mellou, cites Trostle and Yawke's who conducted research which resulted in seven principle steps for educators that one can practice in order to foster overall creativity in children (Mellou, 1996). According to the research, this list begins with the option to facilitate creative thought by allowing the children to use objects autonomously (Mellou, 1996). The instructor can lead by example by modelling what a creative individual might say and do in front of the children. The instructor can encourage the children to imagine how the materials might be used before instruction and activity (Mellou, 1996). The instructor can verbally and positively point out creative thinking and, again, encourage the children to explore their imaginations (Mellou, 1996). The instructor can allow the children to verbally engage in discussion and debate regarding personal creative ideas (Mellou, 1996). The instructor can modify a familiar object into an unfamiliar object by changing its physicality in order to promote creativity and problem-solving (Mellou, 1996). Finally one can add and use numerous objects during role play in order for the children to figure out how to use them and include them in improvisation and play (Mellou, 1996).

6.2. Enhancing Problem Solving through Creativity

Creativity is very closely connected to problem-solving. Fostering creative problem-solving necessitates fixation and cognitive flexibility (Haavold & Sriraman, 2021). Rasmussen University suggests that one can use every day scenarios in order to foster creative problem solving with children. One can use these situations as opportunities to ask the children what solutions might they feel best suited for the given scenarios (Mesrobian, 2021). They additionally suggest the reading of picture books which are emotion based as a way of teaching the

children how to identify emotions not only within themselves but also within their peers. That this can result in relational problem-solving, heightened empathy and conflict resolution (Mesrobian, 2021).

6.3. Enhancing Critical Thinking through Creativity

Creative thought and critical thinking are interlinked. Both thought processes involve the ability to draw from various forms of knowledge and skills, in order to allow the children to see ideas and concepts in a new and unconventional light, break boundaries and go beyond pre-existing provided information (Nilson et al., 2013). Scholars Caroline Nilson, et al. argue that both creativity and critical thought are attitudes rather than aptitudes (Nilson et al., 2013). If one desires to nurture critical thinking skills with children one should encourage the seeking out of different world views, such as belief, culture, opinion and perspective, along with the ability to explore and problem solve resulting in numerous and divers possibilities from varying creative thought and practice (Nilson et al., 2013). An environment which encourages freedom of thought and independence is very important. On the contrary an environment which possesses the fear of rejection, failure, harsh criticism and the pressure to conform might result in a creative block in order to protect one's image and integrity (Nilson et al., 2013). The environment and activities need to encourage the children to think, ask and create their own personal questions along with possessing the ability and confidence to own the answers (Nilson et al., 2013). The pre-school Montessori Academy in Culver City suggests that in order to enhance critical thinking skills in young children, one might encourage the children to problem-solve real world dilemmas such as water scarcity with pretend play involving independent brainstorming, analysis, decisions and solution finding based on fact and reason (MontsAdm, 2021). Other activities suggested involved guided adult and child conversations which encourage the child to think up hypothesis to given situations along with the possibilities of potential outcomes, thinking of a variety of answers to their own personal questions and teaching that causes lead to effects along with the imagining of, again, potential outcomes (MontsAdm, 2021).

6.4. Enhancing Empathy through Creativity

Creative practice is additionally connected to empathy. Children who explore diversity and come to new and original conclusions might better understand and as a result empathize with the differences they are being exposed to (Decety & Cowell, 2014). In order to foster empathy in young children, creative social play and role reversal can be taught so in order to help the children understand how their peers may feel in various given situations (Yaniv, 2012). This teaching method consists of two individuals taking on the roles and behavior of each other, in an interpersonal situation, in order to attempt at comprehending the others perspective and then resorting back to their original selves (Yaniv, 2012). This

research argues that this concept may be presented in the form of theatrical drama pieces aimed at young children or improvisational acting activities practiced in small to large groups. Although one cannot fully know what another is thinking and feeling, during creative empathy play, one might have a glimmer of insight and then be able to learn from it (Yaniv, 2012).

As discovered upon website research on both creativity and empathy, Dr. Ishaq Ashfaq, founder of "The International Child Art Foundation", where the organization has for mission statement to "seed children's imagination, cultivate their creativity, and grow mutual empathy through the arts for a more prosperous, sustainable, and peaceful future." (The International Child Art Foundation, 2023) The organization's vision is "To democratize creativity for the Artificial Intelligence Revolution and develop mutual empathy for "a more perfect union." (The International Child Art Foundation, 2023) The foundation does so through many activities, namely the "Arts Olympiad," which welcomes an international and diverse group of children to create art together revolving around both creative practice and sports (The International Child Art Foundation, 2023). The hope is to promote healthy eating habits and activity, as the activity is in part focused on sports, and foster empathy by pairing up the children in order to co create together; some of which may have never had the opportunity to speak to each other under normal circumstances (The International Child Art Foundation, 2023). The hope is that the children may begin to empathize with children outside of their usual communities and in turn recognize common humanity.

6.5. From Empathy to Ethics

We postulate that enhancing empathy promotes and installs positive morality and ethics by teaching and exploring of a variety of divers and positive core values (Lilly, 2014). We hypothesize that these values can not only serve as guidelines, but also as an opportunity to discover positive parts of one's personal ideology and convictions. This research argues that these guidelines and rules can be discussed with the children and perhaps even created alongside them. These discussions or through the reading of a divers lists of values which are then to attributed to oneself or to be agreed upon by all members of the given group. This would lead to better self-awareness and could become a positive basis for common agreed upon ethical behavior and standards.

7. Theory to Practice

7.1. Research and Results

In 2023 research was conducted at "Oasis des Cultures, Café Associative" a center in Colomiers, France, which has for goals refugee inclusion and fun neighborhood activity. A workshop was led during the duration of an afternoon with a group of seven divers children, from many different countries, principally aged five to eight and one at eleven years of age.

The afternoon began with the reading of a picture book, on "world citizen-

ship", followed by a time of discussion and questions. The children were asked to discuss each page along with free flow speech and conversation, with respect and care, on their personal experiences connected to patriotism, multicultural-ism, individualism, community, globalization and new found discoveries.

This discussion was then followed by an art activity where each child was pre-sented a square white piece of cloth, to color, to their liking, based upon fond memories of their home country or present country of residence. The cloth squares were then assembled and sown together to create one full quilt. The quilt is to be put on display in the association's local.

The workshop ended with a moment of discussion, play and snack. When asked if they liked the workshop all but one replied yes. When asked if they learned something new all but one replied no. All the children verbally stated they would come back.

As leader of the workshop and researcher I noticed that during the art and craft time, after the period of discussion, following the picture book reading, the children seemed far less aware of social standing and potential stigma and ste-reotypes connected to ones country of birth and/or past and primary residence. The children conversed openly about being North African, Central African, North American, Asian and European with personal pride and curiosity towards the opinions and works of others. There were no violent or degrading illustra-tions. Each child found something positive and unique to say about their coun-try of choice without given rules nor examples aimed at drawings, attitudes nor emotional representation. That if shown and instructed to look at the globe with equality, respect, love and interest the children respond and emulate the given ideology and example.

The aim is to not only foster creative thought and ability but also contribute, with acting together, to the recognition of personal value and the value of others enhancing both empathy and in turn contributing to bettered ethical behavior.

If to do so again, all the children would need to fit better within the given ages of interest being pre-school and aged four to six.

7.2. Challenges and Limitations

In terms of challenges and limitations one might face when implementing the given proposed strategies for fostering creativity and enhancing its connecting thought processes are the given countries, cultures and establishments gover-nance. Freedom of expression and exposure to diversity may be allowed in dif-ferent ways and to different degrees. One community may prefer a unified belief system and rules of conduct, another agreed upon core values and rules of con-duct and yet another, perhaps solely focusing on the rules of conduct. Most sys-tems are put in place in order to create and maintain a functioning and harmo-nious community. In order to foster creativity in young children and at the same to enable them to navigate and adapt to their given culture and communities one may needs to establish organized freedom (Mellou, 1996). Researcher Dennis

Child concluded that, "Too much freedom might encourage anarchy; too much guidance might produce sterile conformity." (Mellou, 1996)

7.3. Findings to the Classroom

Here is a more detailed, example of how one might implement previous statements and research regarding, primarily creativity, with preschoolers over the span of one day. The imagined setting, for the following full day of creativity activities and workshops, takes place in a day-care center during the summer vacation.

- As the morning starts and the children begin to enter into the classroom the adult instructor can have printed out coloring sheets, on the day's chosen theme, available on the tables for the children to color in as they desire. Themes can consist of a variety of subjects such as "Environmentalism," "The Farm," "Toyland," "World Citizens," etc. For the purpose of this exercise we have chosen to focus on "Fairy Tales."

- Once all the children have arrived and the day has officially begun the instructor can invite the children to sit in front of the classes writing board.

- The instructor can start with an introductory activity by defining, as a group, the codes of conduct and core values, that the entire group will be required to follow throughout the day. The instructor can guide the children towards appropriate responses such as "respect", "active listening" and "care."

- Once the rules of conduct and core values have been defined the instructor can start the day's activities with the reading and showing of a picture book on the given theme of the day.

- Once the book has been read, the instructor can remind the children of the given codes of conduct and community agreed upon core values, before opening up with a time of questions.

- After a time of questions the instructor may allow the children to express individual likes and dislikes regarding the story along with personal opinion and perhaps room for improvement.

- The instructor can ask the children what they would have proposed as an alternative ending.

- The instructor can ask the children for various personal solutions to given problems within the story such as "How would you have saved the hidden away princess from the scary fire breathing dragon?"

- After the time of discussion is complete the instructor can ask the children to stand up and prepare for a drama activity.

- The instructor can ask the children to stand up in front of their classmates one by one and take turns acting out each a different character from the story such as "a dragon", "a princess", "a prince", "a magician", "a talking horse", "a mean witch", etc.

- The instructor can then ask them to pair up, in duos or trios, and improvise scenarios with their given character. For example "a witch and a magician are running late to class and are impatiently waiting for the bus at the bus stop," "a princess and a prince are baking a special cake for the queen's birthday,"

"a talking horse and a prince are lost in the forest and need to get back to the palace," "Fairies are discussing what gifts to give the new born princess at a tea party."

- After the exercise is complete the instructor can distribute half drawn out printed coloring sheets, as seen in the previous doodle activity, for the children to complete, as they wish before lunch.
- After lunch the instructor can set up the tables for a time of painting. The instructor should cover the tables, provide aprons, take out blank sheets of paper, glasses of water and different colored paints and brushes.
- The instructor can ask the children to paint a fairy tale scenario or fairy tale character.
- After they have finished their paintings the instructor can lay them out to dry to then be put on display at the end of the day.
- The instructor should allow for a break, after the activity, and this may result in the children playing freely outside while the paintings are drying.
- Once the children have finished playing outside and the paintings are dry and on display the instructor can remind the children of the agreed upon rules of conduct and core values.
- The instructor can ask them to sit down and individually describe to the class what they have drawn and why and what makes it special to them.
- The instructor can the allow for additional free play, where the children can choose the toys and games, independently or by group, of their liking, as the children await for their parents.
- Once the parents have arrived the instructor can allow each child to walk them through, at their own individual pace, the paintings on display before letting them be free to go home.

8. Conclusion

In summary, creativity is a positive thought process, which begins during childhood, and can be nurtured through various forms of exercises and activities. These various different forms of play not only affect the child's creativity but can also have an impact on one's ability to creatively problem solve, critically think, have empathy and on the betterment of one's personal ethical code. This can be encouraged, taught and exercised in both the classroom and at home. This paper defends that creativity is an important skill which should be fostered with both an understanding of the structure one is working within but also with the ability and knowledge of how to ethically break free of that given structure. After research and findings, we postulate that by fostering creativity children will become better independent thinkers and possess a firmer interest and understanding of difference, diversity and commonality. This is important as this would lead to better, more novel and original solutions along with heightened empathy resulting in better ethics and morality for those within and outside of one's community. That the teaching of creativity will not only bring about more beauty

and interesting and original creations but lead to a more sustainable, peaceful, progressive, benevolent and understanding future for us all.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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