

## CREATING CREATORS: HOW CAN WE ENHANCE CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS? BY LEGO FOUNDATION.

Short reflections from the field in favor of prioritizing creativity as central activities for learning.

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The focus of this publication by the Lego Foundation, containing short reflections from six distinct yet inter-related perspectives, is a powerful call for shifting education methodologies from the contemporary mode of the 3T's—test, teach, test—to one that prioritizes creativity and play as central activities for learning.

The first short article is by Angelina Angie Matsie Motshekga, the South African Minister of Basic Education, who points to the acute need in that nation for teaching “our teachers new skills in order to teach learners what actually comes naturally to them—that learning is through play.” This is a central theme for all six writers.

Helen Chapman, the Director of Learning and National Programmes at the Victoria and Albert Museum, stresses curiosity as the root of creativity. She points to a poster in her office that says “Ask More Questions” as a key pedagogical technique that opens up imagination. Curiosity and imagination, taken together and wedded to play, open more and more possibilities for positive change as well as adapting to change. She outlines how utilizing object-based experiential learning—drawing upon art, design and performance—in the museum and its programs is proving to be a key source of inspiration for students.

The third commentator, the Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills at OECD, Andreas Schleicher, writes of empowering learners to cope with a fast-changing world, helping them to create new roles that may have not existed before for themselves—and certainly new answers to old questions and new questions. He points to the importance of a 2021 PSA (Programme for International Student Assessment) research initiative that will evaluate students’ proficiency in creative thinking as a way to assist educators around the world to develop new and better methods to encourage creativity. He says that PISA defines creative thinking as “the competence to engage productively in an iterative process involving the generation, evaluation, and improvement of ideas that can result in novel and effective solutions, advances in knowledge and impactful expressions of imagination.”

Michael Resnick, Professor of Learning Research at the MIT Media Lab extols the value of kindergarten-style learning for fostering creativity. Instead of students sitting at desks listening to lectures as schools attempt to pour information into their brains, he suggests the importance of cooperative projects, the encouragement of passion among learners focused on activities they care about, the value of peers in the creative process, and as others say, the centrality of play in childhood learning.

From the perspective of government, Vicki Phillips, former Education Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, points to the necessity of shifting from an either/or perspective to a both/and methodology in education. The importance of changing curricular structures is key in this view—dismantling silos of learning, bundling courses differently, and making the boundaries between grade levels (particularly between high school and college) more permeable and flexible. She also stresses the importance of great teaching. “Great teachers don’t just teach you, they change you.” She points to research at Michigan State University into ways teachers can integrate creativity in the classroom.

A different vantage point is offered by Karabo Rithuri, a student at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. She is clear that the first thing needed is to abolish standardized teaching and testing learners through one-size-fits-all exams. She advocates using technology as a way to promote personalized learning. She gives the example of coding as a good way to promote critical thinking and teamwork. “Students need to be exposed to something that drives them to excel because people who are driven go out of their way to be creative.”

The final contributor, Andria Zafirakou, Associate Deputy Headteacher at the The Alperton Community School in London, returns to the centrality of play as an education methodology. She teaches art and is very

aware of the power of art-making to help students engage in self-exploration, develop their own ideas, and learn new skills. But she stresses that this is possible in all disciplines. In her view, play helps a young person feel comfortable and confident as well showing them it is natural and even helpful to make mistakes in safe environments. What is needed is educational structures that provide proactive support and encouragement to take risks.

Thus, in various ways, from multiple perspectives, these six passionate advocates for creativity in education lay out new ways for professionals and parents and all who care about our children to give them the tools they need now and will need even more as change accelerates in the world at an even faster rate.

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<https://www.legofoundation.com/en/why-play/skills-for-holistic-development/creativity-matters/creating-creators/>



Thanks to generous support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Our Neighborhood*, is a compilation of stories and research from the family engagement field. It is intended to be a living repository and guide for STEM Learning Ecosystems and other communities interested in cultivating strong community partnerships to prepare the next generation.

This annotated bibliography was compiled by TIES for *Our Neighborhood*.