

FOSTERING CREATIVE ABILITY IN THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES: LESSONS FROM RESEARCH

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In the increasingly complex world for which our schools must prepare students, the abilities to (a) make meaningful connections within and across disciplines, (b) discover, shape, and reframe essential questions and problems, and (c) contribute to complex solutions and new knowledge, are at a premium. This set of abilities can be considered to represent creativity. However, in the drive to help students meet minimum academic benchmarks and absorb existing knowledge, creativity has been marginalized as an optional extra, redefined as fun activities or hands-on learning, taught as a separate set of skills devoid of academic content, or considered the exclusive province of music or art. As a result, far from celebrating creative ability, our schools rarely provide opportunities to foster the abilities of students with extraordinary creative potential in a manner that reflects real-world creative productivity. This paper reviews research on the relationship between domain knowledge and creative thinking, and the relationship between general intelligence and creativity, and draws implications for curriculum and instruction. A theoretical framework of expertise is used to explore possible directions for educating students as both potential knowledge experts and potential creative contributors within academic domains. This session is suitable for researchers, curriculum developers, and educators.