

# How schools are killing creativity



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How Schools Are Killing Creativity I speak about education from an unflattering point of view maybe because it is destroying our fascinating, curious minds. I don't claim to be an expert in education. I am still a student and I speak for myself. I believe that students should have a voice in the education system today, because mainly they are the ones who are being educated. The control of education should be in the hands of students. They should be centered first and foremost. Many people have written about ways to change education, but what good has it done if we are leaving out the voice of the students?

Years continue to pass, some students graduate, some fail out, some drop out and nothing really changes. The education system reminds me of a dictator that is unwilling to step down. I'm aware that no education system is perfect, and I believe they are all the same across the world. We memorize, study for the test and forget, only to know 10 years later what an atrocious world we have been constructing. I strongly feel that our methodologies in schools are demolishing creativity. Students have lost their capacity of creation simply because our teaching methods don't stimulate innovation and creativity.

Remember being a kid and wanting to play around? No one told you how to use your imagination or taught you how to be creative. You played with LEGOS. You pretended you were an astronaut and imagined traveling in space. Being naturally creative, you asked questions like " Why is the grass green? " and " Are we alone? " questions no wise man could answer. Then came school, a child's worst nightmare. You learned to live in a rotten

environment. You were bullied, made fun of, and you had this teacher that told you to stop dreaming and live in reality. So what did you learn at school? You learned to stop questioning the world, to go with the flow, and that there's only one right answer to each question. The "whys" you have always wanted to ask are never on the test, and they are omitted from the curriculum. Creativity isn't a test to take, a skill to learn, or a program to develop. Creativity is seeing things in new ways, breaking barriers that stood in front of you for some time. Creativity is the art of hearing a song that has never been written or seeing a work of art on empty canvas. Its essence is in its freshness and the ability to make dreams come to life. Imagine this: A normal classroom with cheerful faces.

Students' excitement to start school ignites the classroom. The teacher asks the students to draw a tree. Some students were talented, others were okay, and some students couldn't give a visual figure of a tree. The teacher rates every student's work. Some students get an A+, some get a D and others get a big fat F. Those students who got A's now believe they're highly talented and artistic, but those who got an F... Well, they start to think they are losers and their works is rubbish. From this "draw a tree" assignment, creativity starts to linger in the air and then, in time, fades away.

This is why many adults say "I can't draw!" In school, children are "taught" to draw shapes like a "perfect" triangle. Everything is "properly" drawn. Whenever a child attempts to color something, the teacher screams in panic: "Do NOT color outside the lines!" In the 21st century, the world demands students who can think creatively and critically. As technology develops, we will have robots to do all the basic work for us. However, it is our mission to

ensure that the next generation will be full of inventors, musicians, painters, mathematicians who will, in turn, bring humanity to another level.

In this TED Talk " Do Schools Kill Creativity? " Sir Ken Robinson said that instead of growing into creativity in school, we grow out of it. Students all over the world have had more years of schooling than they care to count. During this process, students are taught that making a mistake is a sin. We have planted in our students' minds a picture of a perfectly, carefully drawn life. Today's teaching techniques are taking the beauty out of learning. Diminishing creativity from our student's mind is a serious problem with wide-reaching effects.

How exactly are schools diminishing creativity? We learn that being " good" means sitting still and nodding yes, while being " bad" means attempting to do things differently. The cycle of sitting still, memorizing, testing and getting a job have existed for a long time now and few dared to challenge it. However, those who dared to challenge the status quo like Albert Einstein, the Wright brothers, and Walt Disney have changed the course of history. I understand that memorizing is the fastest way to get good grades, get into a good college, and get a job (which we equate with a good life).

We are being educated for the promise of money. As a student I know one thing for sure: I never want to be a product living my life inside a box. I want to cherish my brilliant mind. I want to imagine, to create, to be the best I can possibly be. I never want to be a robot. I want to argue, to challenge and define the impossible. I cannot possibly let someone assemble my life. How do we expect students to be creative if teachers give them the outline, the title, and the structure of their " creative writing assignment? We give

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students model answers to memorize, we give a specific title to write a poem about, and we truly give them everything but the freedom to express their ideas. Youth have fresh ideas. While teachers complain that students are spending an awful lot of time on social networking, they forget to mention that it's the only way we, the students, can have our voice heard. Education isn't about facts being stored in our minds so that we can get tested on them. Education is the beauty to nurture creativity, to fuel curiosity and to create a wellrounded person.

China is battling its way out to the top and promising that no child will be left behind. Behind this competition, we forget the purpose of education. Schools become business, and factories where children come out as pale as ghosts with everything being structured " perfectly" and " properly" in their minds. Somewhere in our battle and pursuit of meaningless papers, diplomas and money, we have lost the true meaning of learning. During our insane worship to win the race, during our mad love to become number one, we forget that our schools are raising children that are racing to nowhere.