

In cold blood: the murder of creativity in schools

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Everyone can remember standing in front of their kindergarten class and reciting the alphabet.

We all have faint images of repeating the order and pronunciation each letter after our teacher. We all learned to emulate our instructors with perfection, knowing that it-imitation- was the only way to succeed in the modern American educational system. If a person said the alphabet in the wrong order or didn't recognize the difference between an " A" or a " P", they were immediately deemed " below average" or " dumb" or worst of all, " mentally challenged". Therefore, in an attempt to avoid the horrid stigma of being declared stupid, we never sought to be different or unique in anyway. For example, who said it was wrong to say the alphabet backwards? However, if a daring five-year-old did this, his or she would possible enjoy another year of nap time, while peers proceed to the next grade. Though schools have been given the task of educating today's youth, they have taken a step too far and have taken a unintentional detour from their original goal-educating- to the hostile mission of killing creativity by discouraging individuality, promoting objective-based subjects- math and science- over subjective-based subjective- music, art, dance, history, and many others that require innate human creativity, and promoting the erroneous idea that every child can be educated by the typical, unchanging, " pre-packaged", western curriculum.

It is well known that many school shun individuality and praise uniformity. For some reason, schools are operated like factories that are attempting to mass produce the " ideal student". When a student steps out of the mold or doesn't fit the pre-designed " blueprint for academic success", they instantly

become a threat to the school's "educational conveyor-belt" and dropped into the "faulty product bin", which is usually detention or special education classes. Modern schools have an underlying hate for freethinking and expression, though these philosophies are preached in classrooms around the country. For example, there have been fiery debates over whether or not schools should require uniforms. Some schools claim that uniforms would eliminate dress code violations, reduce behavioral problems, create uniformity, and reduce gang related activity.

(Susie, 2010) However, this is contradictory to the fundamental beliefs of encouraging students to "think outside the box", think critically, and "be yourself". These obviously opposing views shed light to the hypocrisy of modern educational institutions that discourage individuality, aiding in the manslaughter of the future of innovation and creativity. However, a vast amount school systems and private corporations are investing in murder weapons for the final war against creativity. Many schools have deemed science and math of more importance than the arts, music, dance, and the humanities. For example, A+ College Ready is an Advanced Placement® Training and Incentive program launched with a \$13.2 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative.

The program is designed to significantly increase the number of students prepared to take rigorous college courses in math and science. Students are rewarded money just for passing an exam in the "important areas"-science, math, and English. Though these initiatives do not discourage the arts or humanities, it does reflect the theory to students, school, parents, and society that science and math are more important than singing or dancing or <https://assignbuster.com/in-cold-blood-the-murder-of-creativity-in-schools/>

painting. But why is this so? Well, Sir Ken Robinson, world renowned college professor, points out that “ every educational system on the planet was designed to meet the needs of 19th century industrialization. Subjects that are useful at work are at the top of the hierarchy.

This is why our government is establishing more science schools and spends more money on science and engineering than on the arts.” (Robinson, 2006). In other words, we have ran our schools on a notion developed about 200 years ago by the same people that persecuted a people based on race and denied the right to vote to women. The idea that our educational system is still operated under these beliefs is absolutely absurd. Moreover, it can very well be said that schools dismiss subjects and activities that require talent- something that everyone doesn't have. Though the motive behind this murder of creativity is a modest one, we can not forget that there needs to be balance.

We can not declare science and math as the “ be all to end all” of education and cast the arts and science to the bottom of an eternal abyss. Innovation is the result of creativity and if creativity dies so will the progress of education and mankind as a whole. Imagine Da Vinci having an art teacher or J. K. Rowling's English teacher. Imagine someone telling Leonardo that his painting didn't adhere to a certain guideline of art or that Rowling's storyline wasn't organized correctly.

These images are even hard to construct in our minds. These are perfect examples of how destroying creativity can lead to destroying innovation. How can anything “ new” come to existence if someone doesn't think “

beyond” what concretely exist now? Therefore, schools must cease with the idea that human being can be educated through a prepackaged curriculum that is universal and always works. For example, an educator made the statement that “ In the large urban school district in which I am currently student teaching, teachers receive a book that tells them exactly what they are supposed to be teaching each day of the school year. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for my preference for special(individualized) education.

We can be creative in coming up with ways to teach the students what is specified by their goals, and when the teacher is allowed to be creative, the teacher can allow the student to do the same.” (Ng, 2010) This comment repeats that notion that individualized education should be proffered over the mass production, factory-like education seen in school around world. With prepackaged curricula circulating there is no hope for new inventions of ideas. There is no hope for the future of art, literature, or music. There is no hope for creativity. Moreover, Robinson has another profound reflection on the idea that school’s are currently thrusting a blade through the heart of creativity.

At the 2006 TED Conference, Robinson told the following story that illustrates comically the innovative minds of children. He proclaimed that “ I heard a great story recently, I love telling it, of a little girl who was in a drawing lesson, she was 6 and she was at the back, drawing, and the teacher said this little girl hardly paid attention, and in this drawing lesson she did. The teacher was fascinated and she went over to her and she said, ‘ What are you drawing?’ and the girl said, ‘ I’m drawing a picture of God.’ And the

teacher said, ' But nobody knows what God looks like.' And the girl said, ' They will in a minute.

' "(Robinson 2006). This story provides a solid example of the importance of encouraging creativity and innovation, which can be found in the arts and humanities, not in math and science. Though a bit laughable, this tale presents a serious idea that shows how naturally creative minds that could possible become the next Einstein, Shakespeare, or Beethoven. In conclusion, schools continue to take stabs at the unconscious corpse of creativity. Through condemning uniqueness, overlooking the importance of the arts and humanities, and encouraging a 200 year old prepackaged system focused on old philosophies and ideals.