Thought Paper 3

Knowing Creativity

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In his education TEDtalk Ken Robinson suggests schools teach creativity out of students and fail to prepare them for a challenging and unpredictable future. He observes “creativity now is as important in education as literacy and we should treat it with the same status” (Robinson, 2007). I tend to agree with Robinson’s observations. However, I disagree with according literacy and creativity equal status as it suggests approaching them in a similar way.

Most educators agree literacy and creativity are important. They can be described. Their developmental nature is understood and there are a range of strategies for teaching them. Many would say the tests and rubrics used to evaluate literacy indicate a fairly good grasp on the subject. However, developing tools to evaluate creativity or “the process of having original ideas that have value” (Robinson, 2007) is more problematic and the literacy-creativity analogy breaks down. Assessing an idea’s originality appears relatively easy. Measuring its creative value requires clairvoyance. It requires an understanding of the outcomes that will flow from the idea or, to paraphrase Von Glasersfeld (2008), in assessing the value of a truly original idea we would have to know what we will come to know before we come to know it. In addition, the observation that a significant number of adults are not functionally literate suggests we need to reconsider applying the literacy approach to creativity.

We need to approach creativity creatively. We can start by rethinking evaluation. Some rubric proponents suggest their validity requires a constructivist approach. Teachers and students work together to describe creativity in this model. They integrate theory and application and use what they learn to develop criteria for evaluation. And even though some of their ideas will fail the future values test, their cooperation, shared decision making, creativity, and futuristic thinking will better prepare everyone for a challenging and unpredictable future.

References

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