

The Challenge of the 21st Century: Nurturing Young Children to be Creative Communicators, Collaborators, and Critical Thinkers

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THE YOUNG CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASSROOM WILL BE LIVING, WORKING, AND BUILDING FAMILIES IN:

2040 2050 2060

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Challenges in the 21st Century

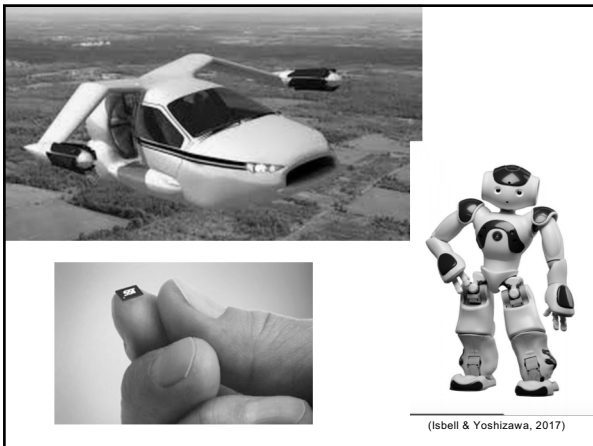
The children in our classroom will live in a very different world than today.

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Some Reasons

- Expanding amount of new information.
- Adapting to the changing environment.
- Increased understanding of brain development.
- New challenges that have never dealt with before.

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Researchers predict that in about 12 years' time there will be **200** new professions we have not heard of.

(Business Day, 13/09/2018)

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Directors Have Many Responsibilities

- Children
- Staff
- Family
- Board
- Community



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What Is Your Vision for the Program?

- What do you want the program to be like?
- How do you want the children to feel?
- Do you want a good work environment?
- Are you interested in having a team effort?
- Will you inspire teachers' and children's growth?

OR

Just continue doing what you are doing?

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Director with a Vision

- See the “big” picture
- Build a team
- Don't get bogged down with small details
- Collaborate through regular meetings
- Value the ideas and thoughts of others



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Why is
creativity
important in
today's
world?

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Why is Creativity Important for Today's Children?

- Use varied ways to communicate
- Collaborate with diverse people on complex ideas
- Develop creative confidence to deal with issues
- Accept and take risks to make innovations



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Torrance: A Pioneer in the Study of Creativity

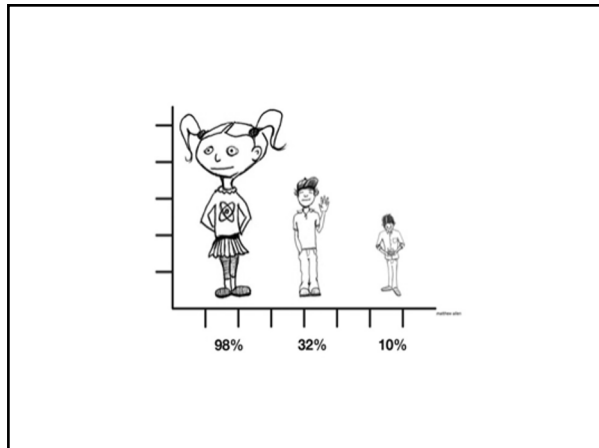
- Studied young children in his research
- Identified that 4-year old children were the most creative
- Developed Torrance Test of Creativity



Dr. E. Paul Torrance

(Fox & Schirmacher, 2015; Torrance, 1965)

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*At a Time When Creativity
is Most Needed, We are
Seeing a Decline*

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WHY? WHY? WHY?

- Focus on test-taking
- Increased requirements and standards
- Divergent ideas not valued
- Less time for the arts: visual arts, music, and movement
- Less opportunity for play
- Increased stress and anxiety

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Research

- Torrance Creativity Test: Scores have decreased (1998 –2008)
- Children are less expressive, less talkative, and less imaginative.
- The most significant decrease was found in the Kindergarteners (5 – 6 years old),
- Young children generate fewer and unique ideas.

(Kim, College of William and Mary, 2017)

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What Are the Skills Needed for Today's Young Children?

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The Essential 4C's in the United States

- Creativity
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking (Problem Solving)

(Trilling & Fadel, 2009)

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Confidence

- Willingness to Try
- Persistence
- Making Mistakes
- Taking Risks



Golinkoff, R. M., & Hirsh-Pasek, K. (2016).

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Who has the potential to
be creative thinkers?

Young Children and
their Teachers

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Our Challenge:

To support and nurture
children and teachers
being creative

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Every Problem is an
Opportunity to be Creative!

- Don't sweat the small stuff
- Identifying the small problems that can't be ignored, which will become bigger problems
- Listen, listen, LISTEN!!!
- Develop a plan of action: Creative Problem Solving

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Creative Problem Solving: A Tool for Directors

- Identify the problem
- Preparation: Study, listen, read, think
- Incubate: Leave it alone and let it rest
- Illumination
- Verification



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Problem: How do Directors
Nurture Creative Thinkers?

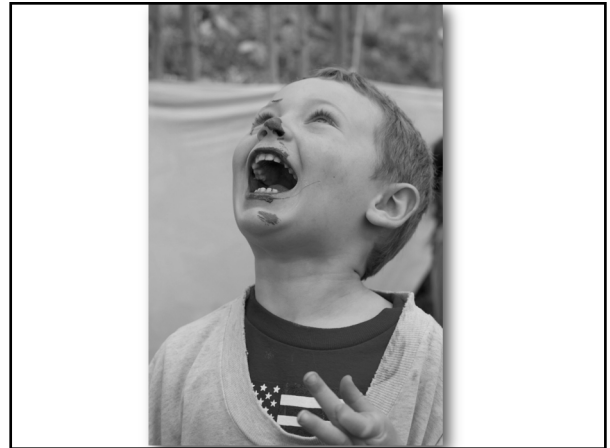


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Creative Thinkers need
Time to PLAY with:

- . Ideas
- . Materials
- . Peers
- . Possibilities

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**Need to be
Communicators**

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Kim: "I
can
make the
water go
up!"



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**Opportunities to
Collaborate**

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Attempt to construct something unique

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Real Experiences: Collaboration



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Small Group: More Communication and Collaboration

More
chances to
talk

More
opportunities
to collaborate

More ways to
impact the
play

Peer tutoring
possibilities

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Small Group: More Language



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Creative Thinkers
Need Novel Materials,
Open-ended
Possibilities, and
Places to Work

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“My brain is full of ideas!!!”



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Open-ended
Materials: Many
Possibilities and
Combinations



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**Creative Teacher
=
Creative Children**

(Isenberg & Jalongo, 2014)

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How do we support
teachers who nurture
creative thinkers?

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Emotionally Safe and Secure



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A Place of Respect and Trust



- Teachers are trusted to do the right thing
- Children are viewed as capable
- Parents want good things for their children
- The board wants a wonderful program

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Share in the Decision-Making Process

- Ask for their input
- Listen
- Communicate
- Include all voices
- Everyone feels they are contributing (ownership)
- Sometimes you have to make the difficult final decision



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How to Support Teachers by Mentoring

- Respect for all levels of knowledge
- Move forward from where you are
- Provide support:
 - Encourage
 - Identify good things
 - Demonstrate
 - Work cooperatively

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Problem: Improving the Environment

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Decluttering



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Create a Wonderful Environment



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Building Relationships and a Team

- We are in this together
- We have a shared vision: Good things for young children
- How can I help?
- Supervision “by walking around”
- Accept that you cannot always make folks happy
- Not a pal but a co-worker

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Designing an Environment that Nurtures Creativity

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- Provide safe and caring places
- Present variety of materials and novel items
- Respect and encourage uniqueness
- Provide places to work and display creations
- Understand that mistakes are part of learning
- Encourage self-evaluation

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Providing Choices:

- Children decide what they will work on
- Determine which materials they will use
- Group or individual decides which projects to do, book to read, songs to sing, or find a way to solve problems
- Self-evaluation/Independent thinking

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Which Center Will You Work In Today?



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Aesthetically Beautiful Environment



(Isbell & Evanshen, 2012)

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Communicating and Collaborating with Children about their Ideas



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Valuing Creative Efforts



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Chris:
"Hey! This
one sounds
louder than
the other
one!"



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What is our
challenge?

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Building a Community of Support



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Community Displays



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Put Your Creative Juices to Work

- Think about new possibilities
- Try different ideas
- Have a plan of action for issues
- Create a new design for your communications
- Add an exciting and interesting addition to your environment
- Celebrate your accomplishments!

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To **NURTURE** Creative Thinkers, Communicators, Collaborators, and Problem Solvers! Children, Teachers, and Yourself



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