

Spring 2017

Connecting The Unconnected: Understanding Creativity At Work

Kate Rogers
Kennebec Valley Community College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters



Part of the [Cognition and Perception Commons](#), and the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rogers, Kate, "Connecting The Unconnected: Understanding Creativity At Work" (2017). *Thinking Matters Symposium Archive*. 103.

https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters/103

This Poster Session is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Thinking Matters Symposium Archive by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.

Connecting The Unconnected: Understanding Creativity At Work

Kate Rogers
Kennebec Valley C.C.
Advisor: Mike Tardiff

“Creativity is as important as literacy and numeracy, and I actually think people understand that creativity is important - they just don't understand what it is.” - Ken Robinson

Objectives

- To explore the diversity of creativity in the minds of individuals from a spectrum of occupations.
- To understand the value of creativity in society and in education.

Methods

I interviewed six different people about how creativity looks in their field.

- A creative writing teacher,
- a hospital lab technician,
- a Nazarene minister,
- a print-shop machine technician,
- a nurse who does government assessments for MaineCare.
- An auditor for a major drug company

Question Topics

- The role of collaboration, inspiration, and improvisation at work
- Definitions of creativity
- Perceptions of own creativity
- The importance of creativity to work

Why does this matter?

- Identifying common forms of creativity in both 'artistic' careers and in all other careers might lead to new, insightful ways to integrate creativity into education, preparing students for work in the modern world.

Collaboration

“Everyone comes from a different background and they view things very differently...I've seen a lot of things, but I haven't seen everything yet.”

- Every single participant acknowledged that collaboration is essential to their job.
- When people put ideas together, the result is almost always better than with set of one ideas.

Inspiration

“Creativity is the great desire to improve on something.”

- When asked about ideas for sermons, the minister said this: “I like what I write but I know there are far better writers than me out there...often, something more effective already exists for me to build on.”
- All participants, some more than others, discussed how experience and building on other ideas was a big part of what they did.

Improvisation

“I'm creative because I need to be.”

- Everyone improvises and problem solves. The print-shop worker said he improvises 7-8 times weekly. The creative writing teacher said 99+.
- The ability to come up with solutions to a problem is a skill that every single person uses.

Are You Creative?

- Only one person out of five said that they didn't think they were inherently creative, but admitted that they had to be anyways.
- Even after acknowledging the role of improvisation and problem solving in creativity, some people still had a hard time distinguishing that from art-based creativity.
- One person said “I'm creative when I have the time.”

Practicing Creativity

- “I feel as though figuring out how to turn my accidental paint splatter into the opposite of a mistake is like... exercise for my brain.”
- Everyone I interviewed had a traditionally creative hobby outside of work. Poetry, graphic design, painting, music.

In Education

- Acknowledge that creativity exists beyond art class.
- Consider that the skills learned in art class may be useful in applying to other areas of learning.
- Don't just think outside the box- get rid of it!

Defining Creativity in Their Own Words

“Creativity is surprising. It's inspiring. There is nothing new under the sun. While we can advance technologically, I've never looked at my phone and gone 'wow'. I know there is creativity in technology but a painting? That inspires me.”

“Creativity looks different to everyone. It's not easy to compare different kinds of creativity. It's like...drawing cats versus unseating a sitting government. All in all, it's applying what you know/think to a particular objective or goal in a way that people wouldn't expect.”

“It is coming up with new things, but that is vast in it's definition. I think it's creative to plant a garden in addition to write a story, paint a picture or put a computer together....I think that you could build a house, and it wouldn't be a new thing to do that but it would still be a creative process. It's more of a percolating, mind space create thing rather than an original ideas thing.”

“Creativity is the great desire to improve on something that you see, not in a way that is detractive but in a way that gives honor to it's core foundings. It's an improvement on what is already existing and also having the courage to go do it.”

“It's just simply making”