

## The rise and fall of creativity in English education

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### Abstract

*Creativity is currently a popular, but ill-defined, word in English primary education. The concept of creativity has been a recurring feature of government reports, education acts and advice to teachers but the history of creativity is cycles of promotion followed by a swing away from creativity towards a 'back to basics' model. This cyclical nature of educational thought and practice regarding creativity was analyzed. The main threats to creativity seem to be a lack of shared definition; lack of resources; a perception of creativity as antithetical to standards; and teachers seen as technicians rather than professionals. The Hadow Report (1931), which formalised the primary stage of schooling, did not use the word creativity but advocated many approaches that would be considered creative today. Similar approaches were recommended in the Plowden Report (1967) and again in Excellence and Enjoyment (DfES, 2003). In addition to Excellence and Enjoyment, currently creativity is promoted in The Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum, although they all use the term creativity differently. The result is that the government is promoting creativity without teachers, pupils and the general public sharing a clear understanding of what this means. The danger in this lack of agreement is that creativity becomes a meaningless rallying cry rather than an embedded concept. A common conception of creativity as building on skills and knowledge is needed to prevent another swing away from creativity in education. This needs to be supported by trusted, professional teachers.*

**Key Words: creativity, primary education, curriculum**

### Definitions of Creativity

*There will be a few teachers who are not familiar with the word 'creativity'. Over the past twenty years it has been used to indicate possible cures for all the ills which bedevil the education system. It has become a very emotive term; a campaigning banner for some and anathema to others (Foster, 1971, p.7).*

Although this statement is from over 30 years ago, it still resonates today. Part of the reason for this dichotomy is the fact that creativity is not clearly defined. This confusion about definitions is one of the main threats to the place of creativity.

Some of the negative reactions to creativity may be due to associating creativity with misbehaviour and mental illness. Around the same time that Foster was writing, Cropley

(1967, p.20) reported that in common parlance the word creativity meant 'doing whatever you like, or behaving in an undisciplined way', although this was not the definition used by psychologists. Some researchers reported that teachers sometimes had difficulty in distinguishing between creative behaviour and misbehaviour with the result that creative pupils were often unpopular with teachers (Cropley, 1967, p.72; Powell Jones, 1972, p.23). Some studies of creativity have made a connection between creativity and mental illness, with particular individuals such as Van Gogh examined (Lytton, 1971, pp.61-2; Cropley, 2001, pp.20-1), although other studies have countered these by showing that many creative geniuses have displayed good mental health (Cropley, 2001, p.22). Linking creativity with madness had been proposed by Aristotle, while Freud had associated artistic creativity with unfulfilled needs and unresolved conflicts (Weisberg, 2006). However, currently creativity is perceived to be a desirable trait (Alexander, 2009; QCDA, 2009).

Craft (2001a) prepared a review of the literature on creativity for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. She found that there was an immense body of literature related to creativity, the nature of creativity and many related terms such as innovation and entrepreneurship but she discovered that the term creativity did not have an agreed definition, either within society generally or within education specifically. This lack of consensus included to whom creativity applied, whether creativity was a process, product or person and in what contexts creativity existed. There was also a question as to whether creativity is the same worldwide. Craft (2008, 2005, 2003) has cautioned repeatedly about the universalization of the term creativity, fearing that Western ideas of liberal individualism are dominating the creativity discourse. The number of variables that Craft identified, and therefore the number of potential permutations of creativity, is part of the problem in defining it.

Another aspect in which the definitions differed was the domain to which they applied. Sefton-Green and Sinker (2000, p.8) discussed the tension between using the term creativity to refer to "imaginative and expressive work" in the arts and using it for creative thinking in all aspects of life such as business and science. This is particularly relevant to the English primary curriculum.

Yet another aspect in which the definition of creativity differed was the scope of creativity, from genius level 'Creativity' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) to little c creativity (LCC), which related to possibility thinking and the approach ordinary people take to everyday life (Craft, 2000, 2001b). This varying scope was prevalent in the concept of novelty, which was common to many creativity definitions. Lytton (1971) distinguished between objective and subjective creativity. The former related to the creation of a novel product that was appropriate for, and transforming of, its context, while the latter was more accessible in that the novelty only required being new to that individual. Several decades later, Sternberg (1999) had a very similar definition: work that is both novel and appropriate and may involve a physical product or a solution to a problem. He too differentiated between creativity at the individual and societal levels but valued both. Unlike those who feel that children cannot be creative due to their limited knowledge and experience, Cropley (2001, p.28) believed that children's inexperience contributed to their creativity and allowed them to see new solutions. He divided creativity into 'everyday' and 'sublime'. Cropley (2001, p.6) defined three key elements for creativity: novelty, effectiveness and ethicality. The first two elements fit with Sternberg's conceptualisation but the final element was included to emphasise that the term creativity was used for positive outcomes rather than destructive behaviour. Boden (2004) made similar distinctions and required that ideas or products were new, surprising and valuable at the 'psychological' (personal) or 'historical' (societal) level. The presence of this personal

level of novelty in many definitions acknowledges that creativity is relevant to ordinary people rather than just a creative elite and allows the possibility that children can be creative.

While revising the English primary National Curriculum (NC), the government commissioned a report on creativity and culture with the National Advisory Committee on Creativity and Cultural Education (NACCCE). The report, called All our Futures, was published in 1999 but was not widely publicised or circulated. Nonetheless the government did respond to some of the recommendations of that report, notably with the Creative Partnerships scheme, the 'Creativity: find it, promote it!' website, and including Creative Thinking as a cross-curricular skill.

NACCCE (1999) took a wide view of creativity and believed all people had the capacity, in fact the democratic right, to be creative and they determined that this creativity could occur in all aspects of life. They considered creativity to be a 'function of education' (NACCCE, 1999, p.6) rather than a specific subject. They applied creativity to both teachers teaching and pupils learning and firmly believed that creativity could be taught. They defined creativity as, "imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value" (NACCCE, 1999, p.30). This definition fits with the discussion of novelty above.

Although the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2003) used the NACCCE definition of creativity, they felt that this was still open to interpretation and recommended that school staff debate the different aspects of the definition to agree a meaning within the individual school. This approach is echoed by Anderson et al in their training materials for Advanced Skills Teachers. They specifically stated that they were not providing a definition of creativity, that there was no precise definition and that teachers must develop their own understanding of creativity (Anderson et al, 2005, p.16).

In order to explore the place of creativity in education, this advice was followed to establish a definition that would provide parameters for the search. In addition to the definitions discussed above, the following definitions of Lucas (2001) and Beetlestone (1998) were influential.

Lucas (2001) produced a broad definition of creativity, influenced by Gardner's model of multiple intelligences.

*Creativity is a state of mind in which all of our intelligences are working together. It involves seeing, thinking and innovating. Although it is often found in the creative arts, creativity can be demonstrated in any subject at school or in any aspect of life. Creative people question the assumptions they are given. They see the world differently, are happy to experiment, to take risks and to make mistakes. They make unique connections often unseen by others (Lucas, 2001, p.38).*

The Beetlestone definition is also broad. Beetlestone devised three tiers of creativity representing a continuum which can incorporate all of the above definitions of creativity. Tier 1 refers to self-expression, Tier 2 incorporates both individualism and combinational creativity, while Tier 3 represents the genius level Creativity.

Tier 1 - everyone has the right and ability to express their thoughts and feelings, to create

Tier 2 - making unusual connections, developing own style

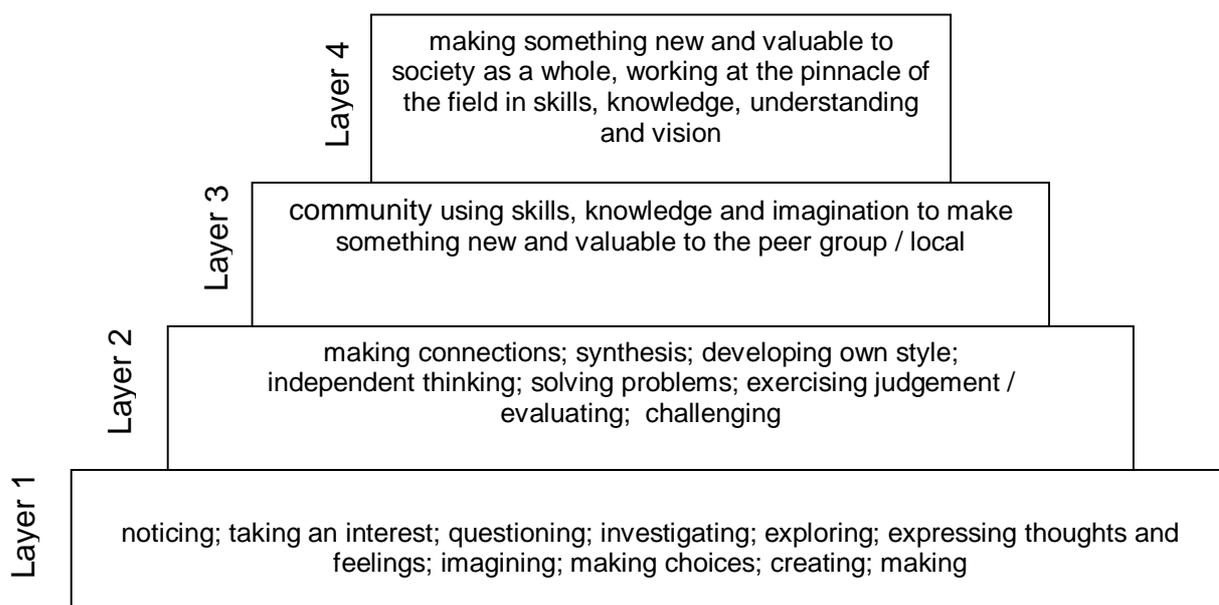
Tier 3 - making something new to society and, because of the technical expertise and vision involved, reach a level of genius

(Beetlestone, 1998, p.95)

The author's definition, in the form of a Creativity Pyramid (see Figure 1), was based on Beetlestone's tiers but augmented with several elements drawn from other conceptualisations of creativity. Layer 1 was expanded to include Claxton's disposition (Claxton and Williams, 2004) of being interested and noticing, accompanied by questioning and enquiry (Craft, 2001b). The questioning in Layer 1 develops into judgement and the ability to evaluate ideas, processes and products (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Gardner, 1993). The effectiveness that Cropley (2001) discussed would be subsumed within the evaluation process. A further element for Layer 2 is problem solving which features in so many definitions of creativity (Beetlestone, 1998; Craft, 2001a; Gardner, 1993; Kneller, 1965; Policastro & Gardner, 1999; Sternberg, 1999). Tier 3 was subdivided to provide an entry level that involved a more restricted view of society and did not require the appellation 'genius'. This reflects the personal level of novelty discussed previously. An important aspect of this model is that it is a continuum, where each layer builds on previous layers, and that it is accessible to all, regardless of age.

The lower layers of creativity provide the foundation for the higher layers. Highly creative people continue to question and notice while working at the top level, creating new and valuable things for society. An individual may simultaneously be at different stages of the creativity pyramid in different domains. You might be at the cutting edge of nuclear physics, while developing your own style in piano playing but only at the noticing and questioning stage in gardening.

**Figure 1 – Creativity Pyramid**



### **Creativity in English Primary Education**

The Victorian era saw the establishment of free primary education in England with the 1891 Education Act. In the 1930s the Hadow Reports divided primary and secondary education, establishing a curriculum for each. The next major education act, the Butler Report (1944) focused more on the organisation of schools rather than the curriculum. The Plowden Report

(1967) focused more on teaching and learning, emphasising a child-centred approach. The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced the National Curriculum, establishing a set of compulsory subjects and setting out in great detail what should be taught in them. The Dearing Review (1994) resulted in some slimming down of the curriculum. However, this was followed by greatly increased detail in English and mathematics with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (1998) and the National Numeracy Strategy (1999). The National Curriculum was revised again in 1999 and was followed by the document Excellence and Enjoyment (DfES, 2003) which focused on teaching approaches. The latter four were then combined into the Primary National Strategy, with the literacy and mathematics frameworks revised in 2006.

In order to identify the role of creativity in these documents, paper or on-line versions of government documents were searched using the string 'creat' in order to locate use of the words create, creation, creative and creativity. The context in which these terms were used was analysed. All of the documents were also examined for terms related to the creativity pyramid so that a wide range of creativity could be identified. This search indicated that there were three main documents promoting creativity: The Hadow Report (1931), the Plowden Report (1967) and Excellence and Enjoyment (DfES, 2003).

In 1931 the Hadow Report (see Figure 2) on primary education did not use the word 'creativity' but did talk about inquiry, experiment and creative imagination in children and initiative and originality in teachers. These relate to the first three layers of the creativity pyramid. Several of its messages are relevant today such as the importance of play, imagination, practical activity and cross-curricular projects. Current teachers in England will recognise Hadow's warning about the dangers of an over-emphasis on English and arithmetic, due to the fact that these subjects were examined, and a lack of time for the arts, which were not.

**Figure 2. Hadow Report**

Instances of Creativity	Threats to Creativity
<p>Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiry</li> <li>• Experiment</li> <li>• Creative imagination</li> <li>• The arts</li> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Cross-curricular projects</li> </ul> <p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiative</li> <li>• Originality</li> </ul>	<p>Over-emphasis on English and arithmetic because they are examined</p> <p>Lack of time for the arts</p> <p>Lack of resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Depression</li> <li>• World War II</li> </ul>

Unfortunately, the Depression resulted in limited funding and resources for schools, which had an adverse effect on the implementation of Hadow's recommendations (Batho, 1989, p.17). During the war and post-war years there was a continued strain on funding for resources which will have had a further impact on children's educational experience.

It is interesting to note that the next national promotion of creativity began in the 1960s as the country became more affluent. The Plowden Report (1967) was a major force for creativity in English education, although it was to suffer an enduring backlash in the 1970s, 80s and 90s

(see Figure 3). Plowden was impressed with children's creative abilities and sought to harness them in education. The Plowden report referred to children creating and creative work many times, mostly with respect to the arts and also called for those working with children to develop their own creative abilities. In one section a lack of creative work was considered an indication of weaknesses within the school. However, in addition to the emphasis on learning through the creative arts, it may be Plowden's emphasis on learning through play that gave a further aura of creativity to this period of progressive education. Play is a term that often arises in discussions of creativity (Boden, 2001; Claxton, 2004; Hope, 2002). There are many commonalities between the Plowden report and the Hadow report from 36 years before, especially the emphasis on enquiry and imagination.

**Figure 3. Plowden Report**

Instances of Creativity	Threats to Creativity
<p>Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiry</li> <li>• Imagination</li> <li>• Learning through the arts</li> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Cross-curricular projects</li> </ul> <p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop own creativity</li> </ul>	<p>Black Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity associated with laissez faire attitude and low standards</li> <li>• Lack of basic skills</li> </ul> <p>National Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject based</li> <li>• Central control</li> </ul> <p>Three Wise Men report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falling standards</li> <li>• Back to basics</li> </ul> <p>Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Applying' Plowden without understanding the underlying concepts</li> </ul>

The Black Papers on Education published in 1969 and 1970 provided a major forum for criticism of the Plowden reforms and progressive education. In their mocking dictionary Amis and Conquest derided the application of the concept of creativity beyond the arts and associated creativity within the arts as lacking in skill and finesse (Amis and Conquest, 1971, p.217). Creativity was seen as an excuse for, if not encouragement of, sloppiness in both thought and product that would drive down standards (Burt, 1969, p.60).

In contrast to the Black Papers, Powell Jones (1972) believed that skill was a necessary precursor to creativity and called for a balance between skill development and opportunities for creativity. This idea of balance has been endorsed again in this century; Joubert (2001, p.30) stated that, 'Creativity should be rigorous, it is grounded in knowledge and skills and there should be a balance between freedom and control in all creative activities.' She felt that the progressive education movement resulted in too much freedom, resulting in the backlash of too much control by the early 1990s.

In response to the sort of criticisms featured in the Black Papers, skills, knowledge and central control were the focus of the next major development in English education. The National Curriculum that was introduced in 1988 was constructed in individual subjects, although supported by some cross-curricular themes. In the guidance produced by the National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1989) there was no explicit mention of creativity.

However, the development of enquiry skills, which had been advocated by Hadow and Plowden, and which is prominent in many conceptions of creativity, still featured within specific subjects (i.e. AT1 science and AT1 mathematics).

Soon after the introduction of the National Curriculum, a review, often known as the Three Wise Men report, examined the implications of the NC on teaching. The emphasis of the report was falling standards in literacy and numeracy and it fit well with the 'back to basics' campaign of the Major government.

*...to function effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our children will need higher standards of literacy and numeracy than ever before (Alexander et al, 1992, p.11, paragraph 25).*

Creative work was mentioned twice in the report. Once was in a quotation from the Plowden report which was followed by a paragraph blaming the poor state of education on those who followed the Plowden report without understanding. The second mention referred to those teachers who saw the curriculum as coming under Plowden-type headings, including investigations and creative work, rather than as discrete subjects. This position was deemed untenable by Alexander et al (1992, p.21, paragraphs 65, 66). One of the conclusions of the report demanded that teachers '...abandon the dogma of recent decades' (Alexander et al., 1992, p.54, paragraphs 185). Although this statement did not name Plowden explicitly, it was certainly implied throughout the report. There was one positive reference to creativity in the document, in relation to the use of a combination of specialist and generalist teaching in middle schools. The implication of this is that creativity is viewed positively with respect to administration but not in regard to teaching and learning.

Towards the end of the 1990s there was an increased focus on English and mathematics in the form of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Alongside this, advice from QCA in 1998 stated that schools must maintain a broad and balanced curriculum but that priority should be given to the core subjects, ICT and RE. Schools were encouraged to prioritise, combine or reduce skills and content in the Foundation subjects. The result was that many schools severely cut time for subjects such as art, music and D&T. Since many people equate creativity with these subjects, the profile of creativity in schools became particularly low.

Following the publication of the All our Futures report (NACCCE, 1999) discussed above, creativity became a formally acknowledged part of the curriculum in England with the Curriculum Guidance Foundation Stage (CGFS) and the new version of the National Curriculum (NC). Although creativity was included in both documents there is considerable question as to whether they mean the same thing by it.

Creative development, one of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, focused on drama, art, music and dance. This implies that creativity equates to the arts. However, in the introduction to this section creativity was also related to learning generally, especially the ability to make connections between different areas of learning (QCA, 2000, p.116). This does not leave teachers with a clear understanding of what QCA mean by creativity. In contrast, creativity is not a subject in the National Curriculum (Key Stages 1 to 4), but a key skill, described as 'universal' (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p.21). This relates to the 'making connections' aspect given in the Foundation Stage and included innovation, using imagination and generating ideas. The Foundation stage seemed to emphasise the first two layers of the creativity pyramid while the National Curriculum focused more on the second and third.

However, Birth to Three Matters (SureStart, 2003), which preceded the CGFS, contained an aspect entitled 'being creative' which was a subsection of 'the competent learner'. Although it included elements of self-expression, there was much more emphasis on the second layer of the pyramid through making connections and problem solving. Layer three was also encouraged through making valuable discoveries that are new to the child and the peer group. In 2007 the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfES, 2007) replaced the CGFS and Birth to Three Matters, combining the main aspects of both, including their approaches to creativity.

Thirty-six years after the Plowden report, Excellence and Enjoyment (DfES, 2003) was published, changing how the NC was interpreted. This was an influential document which formed the backbone of a series of nationally devised professional development related to teaching and learning. The word creativity occurred several times within this document but is never defined. In the foreword, the executive summary and a case study, creativity was used to describe the use of staff by school leaders (DfES, 2003, pp.3, 4, 68). Also in the executive summary, creativity was related to writing, art and music but a few paragraphs later it was used in an undefined way that was distinct from music and the arts (DfES, 2003, p.4, 5). Another undefined use appears in a summary of the Ofsted report (2002), 'The best primary schools have developed timetables and teaching plans that combine creativity with strong teaching in the basics' (DfES, 2003, p.18). One of the principles of learning and teaching that is presented in Excellence and Enjoyment is to 'make learning vivid and real: develop understanding through enquiry, creativity, e-learning and group problem solving' (DfES, 2003, p.29). This does not establish what creativity is but does separate it from some of the elements within the creativity pyramid. The QCA materials and website, 'Creativity: Find it, promote it', which provided suggestions on how to develop children's creativity, were discussed, as was the Creative Partnerships project. While generally promoting creativity, the many differing applications of creativity within Excellence and Enjoyment did not help to develop a shared understanding of creativity, to whom it applies nor its role in education (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Excellence and Enjoyment**

Instances of Creativity	Threats to Creativity
<p>Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquiry</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• The arts</li> <li>• Play</li> <li>• Cross-curricular projects</li> <li>• A way of learning</li> </ul> <p>Headteachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of staff</li> <li>• Combine creativity with strong teaching in the basics</li> </ul>	<p>Lack of a clear definition of creativity</p> <p>Prescriptive curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frameworks</li> <li>• QCA Schemes of Work</li> <li>• Unit Plans</li> </ul> <p>Fear of external forces such as the OfSTED inspection regime, SATs (national testing) and league tables</p> <p>Limited resources and time</p>

The Ofsted annual report of 2003/04 stated that headteachers welcomed the move towards creativity apparently present in Excellence and Enjoyment but were still wary of putting this into practice and recommended that headteachers develop a greater understanding of what creativity meant in practice. The National College for School Leadership produced a

creativity guide for headteachers to achieve just that. In a press release about it the assistant director of research explained that creativity was more than the arts and gave a positive picture of the creative school (NCSL, 2004).

### **What creativity might look like**

An example of a creative school was a three teacher school in Lincolnshire. The headteacher took advantage of the small size of the school to work closely across the school through thematic planning, with an emphasis on progression, making connections across subject areas and to the children's lives. There were many whole school events with the local community invited into the school frequently, sharing expertise but also acting as audience. The children, from Reception to Year 6, were given responsibility for organising these events, taking charge of practical aspects such as timetable and refreshments. The children mounted their own displays and made hard-backed books of their work. Imaginative, high quality resources, such as a working quern for a role play area in a Vikings / local history topic, were obtained to provide children with memorable and meaningful experiences. The headteacher sought opportunities for the children to work with creative professionals such as authors and artists, resulting in collaborative works with children perceiving themselves as creators.

Children at this school were encouraged to hone their skills, think independently and develop their own style. At Lincoln Cathedral there is a practice wall where apprentice stonemasons would develop their skills by carving decorative flowers before being allowed to work in the main areas. Although a model was provided the apprentices were encouraged to experiment and create their own version of the flower rather than produce an exact copy of the existing ones. Apprentices needed to develop their own style, alongside developing the basic carving skills, before becoming master masons. This was the approach the school took with the pupils, whether it was art work, writing, science investigations or any other area of the curriculum.

While none of these individual elements represents a paradigm shift in education, they were uncommon for that time and that area, relating to Layer 3 of the creativity pyramid. This headteacher went beyond the statutory requirements, helping children to imagine, make decisions, make connections, solve problems and make things that were new and valuable. This involved some risk-taking, investment of time and money and considerable trust in the pupils.

### **Preventing another swing away from creativity**

The primary curriculum has recently undergone further reviews, the government commissioned Rose Review (2009) and the independent Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2009), with a new curriculum based on the Rose Review due to be introduced in September 2011. It is interesting that the two reviews were led by Jim Rose and Robin Alexander, two of the 'three wise men' whose report was discussed above as a threat to creativity. Nevertheless, both reports supported creativity, the role of play in learning, the importance of creative thinking and problem solving and the benefits of cross-curricular learning, some of the things that they had earlier criticized. Part of the remit of the Rose Review was to design a curriculum that encouraged creativity, while the Cambridge Review stated that 'Creativity and imaginative activity must inform teaching and learning across the curriculum.' (Alexander, 2009, p.23). These affirmations of creativity may indicate that the place of creativity in English education is currently assured. However, it would be dangerous to assume this will always be the case.

Analysing the changes that have occurred since 1931, there seem to be several main issues that need to be addressed to prevent the next swing of the pendulum, or at least to reduce its amplitude. These issues are: ensuring a clear understanding of creativity, within education and the wider world; the maintenance of basic skills; the provision of sufficient resources; and the perception of teachers as professionals rather than technicians (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Reducing the Swing against Creativity**

Promoting Creativity	Threats to Creativity
Clear, positive definition of creativity shared by educators and the public	Equating creativity with bad behaviour, mental illness, anything goes and / or anarchy
Deep understanding of the how and why of creativity	Focusing on the trappings of creativity
Recognising the need for skills and knowledge as a prerequisite for creativity	Panic about 'Standards'
Trusted, professional teachers	Treating teachers as technicians

The analysis of government documents above has demonstrated that the government does not have a unified definition of creativity. Craft (2003) saw the conflicts in terminology by the government as a limitation on creativity. Huckstep (2002, p.407) described creativity as a 'hooray word' that is applied indiscriminately. This perception is likely to harm the creativity cause rather than develop it. Harlen expressed a similar view:

*Creativity is often used as an umbrella term, covering whatever is felt to be good – like mother love – but ill-defined. It is important to know what we are talking about and to agree on the goals, otherwise all the enthusiasm for creativity could be dissipated (Harlen, 2004, p.2).*

This is a serious warning that should be heeded. A lack of understanding in the terminology is almost certain to result in a wide variety of practice, good and bad, that is described as creative. The lack of clear definition also allows critics to choose their own definition and apply it at will to discredit the concept.

As well as understanding the word itself, there needs to be an understanding of why creativity is relevant to education and how this can be developed. An instrumental programme of training teachers is not enough or there will be a repeat of the Plowden criticisms of teachers applying strategies unthinkingly and unsuccessfully without understanding the underlying rationale.

Part of this understanding is the ability to distinguish between creativity and non-conformity which Cropley (2002) reported was a problem in the past. If teachers and parents equate misbehaviour with creativity, it will not be perceived as a desirable trait, as happened in the traditional schools researched by Lytton (1971). In his conversation with Claxton, Williams presented a non-rigorous view of creativity: 'Isn't there a danger that children could end up just messing about and not learning anything?' (Claxton and Williams, 2004, p.8) A perception of creative learning as pointless 'messing about' by teachers, children, parents or the general public must be avoided.

One way of avoiding this perception is ensuring that basic skills are still emphasised without being seen as antithetical to creativity. As discussed above, the need to raise standards has been used as an argument against creativity in the past, despite the fact that many of those promoting creativity have still seen basic skills as fundamental. Fryer (2002) talked about

creativity as being about 'optimising performance'. Although she was discussing business, this view can be applied to children's learning as well. Again, it seems that a lack of understanding of the underlying concepts of creativity, in both teachers and the general public, has brought about this problem. However, recommending an emphasis on basic skills should not be seen as an endorsement of the current testing regime which teachers find inhibiting and pedagogical approaches that treat teachers as technicians. Instead, an approach that utilises creative learning and creative teaching within the basic skills, as well as with the rest of the curriculum, is needed.

In order to achieve this there will need to be sufficient resources. The lack of money for resources was identified by Batho (1989) as one of the reasons that Hadow failed. With budgets tightening, especially in the current recession, money for physical resources to support creativity and appropriately qualified staff may be difficult to secure. In addition to financial resources there is the issue of time. Williams and Pace (2004, p.16) identified the need in creativity for sufficient time for "wondering, connecting, questioning and making". With the pressure to achieve set targets in English and mathematics, many schools feel there is insufficient time for creative learning. The advice from the NCSL (Lloyd and Smith, 2004) about reorganising the curriculum and the school timetable would help to address this aspect.

Finally, teachers need to be perceived as professionals by the government, by the public and by themselves. As professionals they can model characteristics of creativity: questioning, risk taking, innovating and, most importantly, evaluating. In an analysis of the Norfolk 'Thinking schools, thinking children' project, Harris (2003) found that feeling trusted and in control were important factors in teachers' creativity in terms of identifying opportunities and risk taking. However, it is questionable whether most teachers feel trusted and in control. Haringman (2001, p.152) stated that the dominance of standards has resulted in pressure for teachers to become the 'distanced technician, whose function is merely to deliver the curriculum.' Craft (2003, p.120) has also commented on the political climate that 'appears to treat teachers like technicians rather than artists.' This perception of teachers as technicians could have a negative impact on creative teaching. The technician does not take risks but follows prescriptions. The Cambridge Review (Alexander, 2009, p.34) found that headteachers they interviewed felt that recently qualified teachers had been trained to follow government prescriptions rather than educated how to make their own decisions about teaching, while the Rose Review reported that teachers had found the National Curriculum overly prescriptive, which had reduced their creativity (Rose, 2009, p.28). A confident, educated professional is needed to recognise what the opportunities are and to exercise judgement about which approaches will have the most beneficial effect on developing children's creativity.

'Creativity is seen as a defining characteristic of UK culture in the twenty first century, and its continuation as essential for our future' (The Open Creativity Centre, 2003). If we are to protect this future we need to ensure that creativity continues to be seen as relevant to education and stop the pendulum swinging. I believe that a workforce of trusted, supported professionals with a shared understanding of creativity can do just that.

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