



Learning at JIS – from Cath Wan PYP Coordinator

Encouraging Creativity

On September's parent survey, 50% of responses asked for more information on how we can encourage creativity. Here goes!

Defining creativity

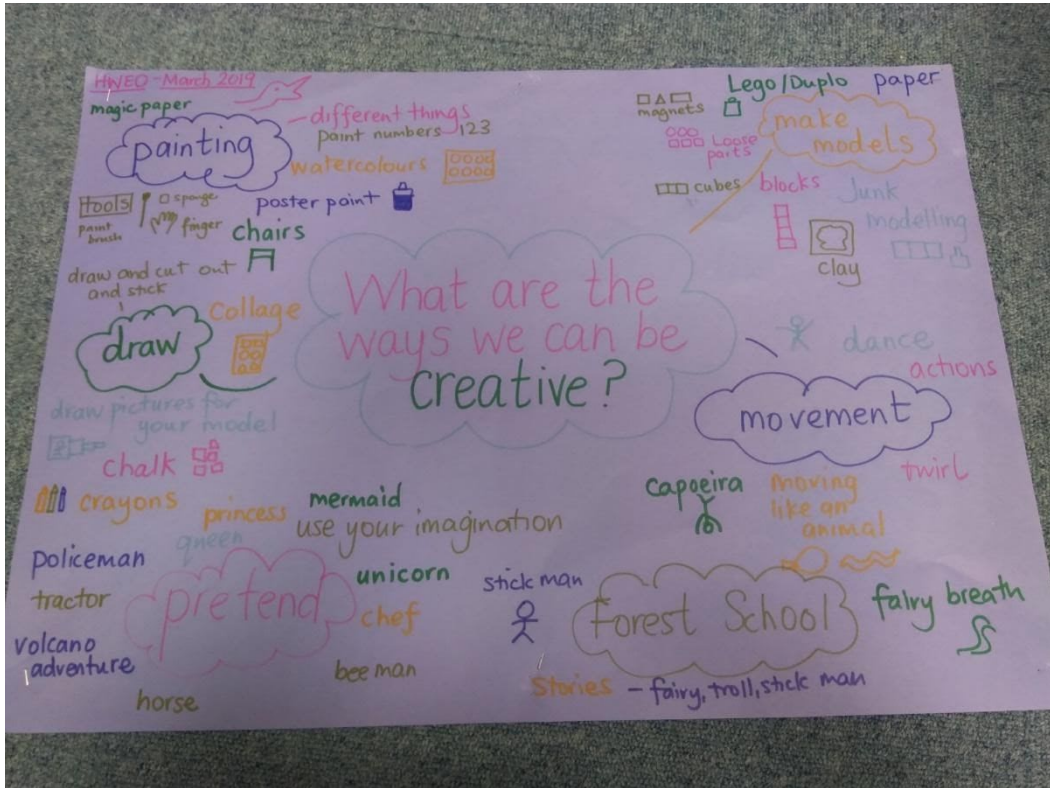
Ken Robinson (2015) defines creativity as “the process of having original ideas that have value.” He goes further to explain the crucial role of imagination in this: “imagination is the root of creativity.”

Here are a few ways we develop creativity at JIS:

1) Explicit opportunities in our Programme of Inquiry

Each year group studies the transdisciplinary theme “How We Express Ourselves.” This theme's descriptor is as follows: “An inquiry into ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.”

Creativity is at the heart of all our How We Express Ourselves units: students are encouraged to compose art, poetry, music, dance sequences. However, we also ensure that other units of inquiry have opportunities for creativity. For example, in P4, students get the opportunity to imagine solutions to school needs and create their own organisations to support these. Multiple year groups also create their own scientific experiments. Our language Scope and Sequence document is integrated into our programme. This ensures that quality reading experiences to stimulate the imagination are happening continuously.



② What ways can you be creative?

Junk Modelling

I like junk modelling - I can make a pancake - the chicken is inside. I can make a unicorn stable with a rainbow. I can make a books with paper. On Forest School I can make a picture of a flower, I used a stick, some straight things to be the grass, it's a picture frame. I also like weaving and bubble writing.

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2) The environment and choice of resources

Over the last few years, we have increased time taken to take students into the forest environment. This environment and the accompanying sense of wonder they experience in the outdoors stimulate student's imagination as the younger students connect fairy stories to the forest and older children create structures with fallen twigs, leaves and stones. You will notice a lot of imagination based play resources in our corridors and classrooms. If you ever stop and listen to the children when they are creating with blocks, stones, shells, their imaginative chatter and their creativity with what they build is quite delightful to observe.

3) How we teach

Open-ended investigations and tasks which require students to justify their response in multiple ways demand creative thinking. Students are imagining different possibilities and extending beyond "right or wrong". The use of provocations, such as thought provoking pictures is another common strategy to encourage students to look at ideas through different perspectives. You may notice a very strong link here between creativity and critical thinking!

Ideas to support your child's creativity at home.

1) Read to them

Children love having stories read to them aloud. It is the perfect stimulus for the imagination. Think about it...the sounds you are making as you read aloud are forming pictures, sounds and emotions in your child's head – unique to them. Compare this with screen time where the pictures and sounds are already provided - it just doesn't compare!

2) Let them play with nature and 'non-toys' such as cardboard boxes.

Many of us have heard the scenario where someone has bought an expensive toy for a child and they have been more interested in the box it came in! This is completely natural. Children naturally have wonderful imaginations and those cardboard boxes, sticks and stones take on a new life in their imagination. In Ken Robinson's talk "Do school's kill creativity," he discusses research on how children often lose creativity as they get older. Our task is to encourage and support children's natural creativity, not smother it with our adult version of what play should be like.

3) Let them be bored. It is all so easy when our children are whining that they are bored to put them in front of a screen, or to feel that being a good parent means organising a multitude of after school activities to keep them active and occupied.

However, that state of boredom sets our minds wondering and wandering, the perfect state for creativity to grow in! It is challenging to overcome the “I’m bored” grumbles but from personal experience, replying with a “You’re bored? Fantastic! Now your brain has the chance to come up with something” and then pretending to not hear the following ten minutes of grumbling can have surprisingly positive outcomes!

Further resources on creativity

https://www.ted.com/talks/manoush_zomorodi_how_boredom_can_lead_to_your_most_brilliant_ideas?referrer=playlist-why_it_s_sometimes_good_to_be_bored

https://www.ted.com/talks/manoush_zomorodi_how_boredom_can_lead_to_your_most_brilliant_ideas?referrer=playlist-why_it_s_sometimes_good_to_be_bored