Sparking the Future: Why Teacher Training is Key to the Creativity Crisis

Welcome to the Deep Dive. We often talk about, you know, the evolving demands on education. Skills like critical thinking get mentioned a lot. Yeah, definitely. But hang on, there's this other crucial element. It often flies under the radar, but it has this huge impact on innovation, on well-being. Absolutely. So today we're diving into the really fascinating world of creativity education teacher training. We're using some great research by Michelle Kornfeld as our guide here. Our mission basically is to give you a shortcut. A way to understand this movement that's really shaping the future of learning. We want to unpack why nurturing creativity is more vital than ever, what creativity education actually means for teachers, and, you know, the really key part, how we can empower educators to actually do it in the classroom.

Powerful thing is it aims to provide a common language, a shared strategy for the whole field. Common language, right? Yeah. Trying to bridge that gap between, you know, the big theories and what actually happens on the ground for everyone involved. Policymakers, teachers. Makes sense. So let's get into it then. The research says creativity is essential for innovation, but like you said, it's often underestimated in schools. We hear creativity thrown around a lot, right? Oh yeah, it's a buzzword. But why is this deep dive, this focus, so urgent right now? Well, if you look at the bigger picture, organizations like the OECD That's the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Right. Influential group. Exactly. Their Learning Compass 2030 framework. It really highlights competencies like creativity for student well-being, for contributing to society.

They talk about creating value out of the box thinking. So the big question is, if it's that important for the future, why the gap? Why isn't it happening consistently in schools? And here's where it gets genuinely a bit concerning. The source talks about a creativity crisis. Get this. While kids IQ scores actually went up since the 90s, their creative thinking scores went down. Yeah. Especially from kindergarten to grade three. That's. That's pretty shocking, isn't it? It really is. And the research links this directly to the rise of test-focused learning. Oh. Which, you know, can really dampen motivation, meaningful learning, originality. The stuff creativity thrives on. Right. And the knock-on effects are huge. You hear about organizations struggling because workers have lost that creative spark they might have had before school really kicked in.

Sir Ken Robinson talked about this a lot. Yeah, I remember his work. For innovation, it can cause stress. Nurturing it actually boosts well-being. E. Paul Torrance pointed this out way back in the 70's. It's fundamental. So it's not just a nice extra. Not at all. And beyond the economy and well-being, the research also positions creativity education as an equity issue. Yes, that's a key point. Allowing kids from all sorts of backgrounds to show their potential, find success in ways maybe traditional tests don't capture, it levels the field a bit. Okay, so if it's that important, what is creativity education in this context? It sounds like more than just, you know, letting kids paint. Right, it's more nuanced. The research uses this helpful model, the 4C model of creativity. 4Cs, okay.

So you've got big C that's like major breakthroughs, Einstein-level stuff maybe. The geniuses. Then little c, which is everyday creativity, finding a clever shortcut, cooking without a recipe, that kind of thing. Stuff we all do. Crucial one for education is mini C. Mini C. Mini C. These are the aha moments, the personal insights that are new to the student. It might not be new to the world, but it's a connection they just made. Ah, okay. Like figuring something out for the first time. Exactly. And recognizing and nurturing those mini C moments is key. They're the building blocks. They can lead to pro C that's professional level creativity and innovation at work, and maybe even big C eventually. It's about fulfilling potential. Distinction, mini C, little C, big C, that's really useful.

So when we talk about teaching for this, what does that actually look like? What's creative pedagogy? Great question. It involves a whole set of practices, things like generating and exploring ideas, obviously, but also giving students more autonomy, more agency. Letting them take the reins a bit. Yeah, exactly. Fostering playfulness, encouraging creative problem solving, letting them take risks without fear of failure. That's a big one, the risk taking. Huge. And co-constructing knowledge, collaborating. And interestingly, the teacher's own creativity plays a role too. So the teacher needs to be creative themselves. Well, or at least model that creative process. And these practices kind of weave together across three aspects. There's creative teaching. That's the methods, the tools the teacher uses. Then teaching for creativity, intentionally nurturing those creative skills in students. Right.

And creative learning. That's about the students' own autonomous processes, how they engage. So it's the teaching methods, the goal of developing student creativity, and the students' own learning process. Got it. So what's the end game? What skills are we hoping students walk away with? The research points to a few key outcomes. Lifelong learning, definitely. Being adaptable. Crucial. Now, absolutely, then entrepreneurial competency and that's not just starting a business, right? It's broader, yeah. It's about curiosity, originality, motivation actually doing things with ideas, taking smart risks. It's also about weaving critical thinking with creative thinking, so analyzing and generating exactly not just one or the other. And solving problems across different subjects, interdisciplinary thinking because real problems aren't neat subject boxes, are they? No, definitely not.

And finally, ethics especially with AI becoming so prominent, we need creative thinkers who are also responsible thinkers. That ethical dimension is really important. Okay, so this deep dive is really focused on the teachers, on their training. How do we actually build that foundation for them? Where do you start? Well, the research uses a pretty solid base. Lee Shulman's work on teacher knowledge from the 80s and 2000s. Okay, Shulman. Yeah. He identified these key types of knowledge teachers need. First, content knowledge. Not just knowing facts, but understanding why your subject matters. How it connects to other things. Really owning it. Deeper than just facts. Much deeper. Then, pedagogical knowledge. Knowing how to help any student understand something. Spotting misconceptions. Finding ways to explain things differently. Tailoring it. Yeah. Right. Curricular knowledge is knowing what's out there. Different resources, programs, ways to approach teaching a topic. The toolkit. Kind of, yeah. Yeah. Then, knowledge about diverse pupils' characteristics. Develop seeing their assets knowing the individual exactly and finally knowledge

for classroom management not just rules but organizing things being proactive supporting collaboration making the class from a place where creativity can actually happen that makes sense those seem like solid building blocks they are and the research also knows how this model has expanded bringing in ideas like learning communities right

There's definitely a shift towards seeing learning as more social, more collaborative. More constructivist. Yeah, socio-constructivist is a good way to put it. And it also looks at the evolution of the PS model for creativity training. The PS model? Yeah, started back in the 60s. Focused on person, process, product, and press-like, the environmental factors. Okay. But what's really interesting are the 21st century additions. One is potential. Potential. too narrow. Like if we only focus on linguistic or logical skills, we miss other talents. Right. Valuing different kinds of smarts. Exactly. And the other is participation. This is about students actively reflecting on their own learning, seeing themselves as contributors in developing ideas. So getting the meta-aware almost? Pretty much. It highlights why teacher training needs to cover things like multiple intelligences and getting students actively involved.

Okay, so we have the why, the what, the foundational knowledge. Let's get practical. How does the actual teacher training put this into action? The research mentioned three core aspects. Yes, three main pillars for the training itself. The first is fostering a creative learning environment. The classroom space and vibe. Exactly. They use a model called scale support for creativity in a learning environment. Okay. It has three parts. Participation. Active learning. Teachers and students as co-learners, focusing on the process, not just the end result. Classroom Climate. Positive relationships, trust, safety. Making it okay to take risks, share wild ideas. Crucial for creativity. Totally. And the physical environment. Flexible spaces, movable furniture, interesting stuff around, making the room work for collaboration and different activities, like a lab almost. A dynamic space. Got it.

What's the second aspect? The second focuses directly on creativity skills. Okay. The actual techniques. Yeah. Things like creative problem solving. You know, a process like clarify, ideate, develop, implement. The structured approach. Somewhat, yeah. Or design thinking, empathy, define, generate ideas, prototype, test, frameworks like that. And this connects back to multiple intelligences. Recognizing creativity isn't just one thing. It's spatial, musical, interpersonal. All those different ways of being smart. Exactly. And the research even mentions spiritual intelligence, like a deep awareness of what's meaningful. It's about tapping into all these different capacities. Wow. Okay. That's broad. And the third aspect. The third one is transdisciplinarity. This is a really powerful idea. Transdisciplinarity. Okay, what's that? It's about creativity beyond the traditional subject boundaries. Instead of learning creativity in science, maybe creativity is the thing you're learning using science.

Ah, so creativity becomes the connector. Precisely. It's the lens, the approach that weaves through everything. Examples given are things like project-based learning, STEAM: Where the A for arts is added to STEM. Right. Arts integration, design thinking again, maker-centered learning, ways of learning that inherently blend disciplines around a creative core. Okay, that paints a picture. Disciplinarity, that's still quite a lot for a teacher to manage. It is. So how does a teacher actually put this together in their day-to-day? You mentioned the research synthesizes this into the five E's.

Exactly. The five E's are meant to be that practical roadmap. It takes those three aspects and turns them into a kind of teaching cycle. It stands for explore, experience, examine, elevate, and express. Okay, walk us through those. Sure. Explore is where you start.

Introduce the challenge. Get students looking broadly, building empathy, seeing different angles. Working curiosity. Setting the stage. Yeah. Then experience. This is the hands-on part. Activities, discussions, playing around with ideas, generating possibilities, embracing imagination, maybe even humor. Getting messy with it. Definitely. Examine comes next. This is reflection time. Developing ideas, choosing pathways, prototyping, testing, being mindful, figuring out what's essential. Refining things. Right. Then, elevate. Here, the teacher guides students to turn their ideas into something original, a real learning product. Maybe even using AI as a tool here, really pushing the creative thinking. Taking it to the next level. Exactly. And finally, express. Sharing the work. Presenting it to classmates, maybe others. Implementing the solution. Bringing it all together. Explore, experience, examine, elevate, express. Okay, that feels like a concrete process teachers could actually use.

That's the goal, yeah. A practical guide. Are the need for a common language, getting everyone-policymakers, principals, teachers, even students-on the same page. How does the research address that? That's where the Creativity Globe model comes in. Creativity Globe? Sounds intriguing. It is. It's a framework with 10 interconnected principles. Each starts with a letter from the word creativity. It's designed specifically to create that shared understanding. 10 principles, like what? Well, for instance, C is for a coordinate building communication between everyone involved-as that safe space for growth, supporting the other four Cs. Communication, collaboration, critical and creative thinking. E is for enable, fostering growth, opening possibilities. A for assets, recognizing everyone's unique potentials. T for transdisciplinarity, which we talked about. Okay, I see the pattern. I feel for innovation, nurturing skills towards real-world problem solving.

V for vocation, teachers seeing the professionalism tied to student success. I am again for integrity, feeling whole, connected. T for trust. Trust seems really key. It's huge. Confidence in students' abilities, fostering hope. And the final Y is for yield. Yeah. Teachers' modeling yielding power, stepping back to enable student autonomy. The idea is that this helps cultivate those 21st century innovators. Trust and yield. Those two feel particularly transformative. Yielding power. That's a big shift for some teaching styles, I imagine. Can be, yeah. But that globe model, it really paints a picture of a whole system working together, doesn't it? Using the same terms, aiming for the same thing. Exactly. Shared map for navigating creativity in education. So tying it all together. Yeah.

If you connect it back, this deep dive really underscores that giving teachers this shared language, these practical strategies like the five E's, it's not just a nice idea. It's essential if we actually want to achieve those big goals, like the OECD's vision for education, especially with the future being so unpredictable. And that call to actually evaluate creativity in tests. That's a bold move. Yeah. It signals a real priority shift. Ultimately, it feels like this research is making a really strong argument for prioritizing creativity and how we train teachers. It's about protecting that natural creativity kids have. Keeping that spark alive. And fostering thinking skills that, well, help us all be more human, especially as AI gets more involved in everything. Well put. So for everyone listening,

what's the takeaway? Maybe think about how nurturing creativity, not just in schools, but everywhere, could help solve problems, big and small. It's not just art, right? Right. It's about being prepared for complexity, for ambiguity. So here's a thought to leave you with: What specific mini C moments, those little sparks of insight, could you start noticing and maybe encouraging in your own life, in your work, or maybe with the people around you?