

## **Creativity the fourth age!**

We have according to Tokyo based think tank – the Nomura Institute passed through 4 ages of human development: agriculture, industry, information and the future age of creativity.

It is seen no longer as the preserve of a few receiving divine inspiration or a lightbulb moment but a positive characteristic in us all that can be nurtured and developed.

Creativity is seen as the devising of solutions to existing problems. Industry is in particular need of creative people.

Schools need to encourage open thinking. Asking open ended questions, allowing time for thought and encouraging children to consider possible responses to a question – not thinking in terms of right and wrong.

With the rapidly rising progress of technology 60% of jobs done by primary children have not been created yet.

US research suggested the sharpest drop in creativity was between 5 and 6 (when children started school).

So what can be done to ensure schools don't crush creativity?

1. Offer the best environment. Depending on the subject or topic consideration should be given to display materials, seating layout and access to research materials. It should be uncluttered. (E.g. costumes in history).
2. Overcome the constrictions of a national curriculum by establishing research into specific projects. Topics can be followed using subject specialists as necessary. (E.g compose a national anthem, build a totem pole, and record a radio programme).
3. Use brain bank connectivity – quite simply get students to share ideas. The sharing of ideas promotes creativity.
4. Allow for moments of peace and quiet for thinking out of solutions.
5. Work with external specialists – artists, entrepreneurs and so on.
6. The biggest obstacle may be the teacher – can be crushed by an instructional approach or by a failure to recognise that some creativity emerges from impulsive behaviour and a refusal to let an issue drop –in other words non-conformity (a teacher's worst enemy at times).

You can't really test creativity but one way might be to ask children to come up with as many different uses for a brick. Ask at the beginning and end of the year. It's as good a test as any!