

Creative Ability

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The Cultural Education scheme for vmbo, vso and pro schools refers to stimulating the student's creative ability. This is in line with curriculum.nu. The artistic and creative ability of students is central to the Art & Culture element of the curriculum. **This ability enables students to use their imagination to produce and reproduce artistic work and thus give meaning to what they do, whether individually or together with others. We regard creative ability as being more than only artistic: in the future, students will increasingly be called upon to use their creativity outside the artistic context. For example for problem solving, cooperation, making connections, and thinking outside the box.**

What should you consider when wanting to increase students' creative ability? There is no single definition of creativity, but creativity always involves producing or giving meaning to something new. Creative ability can be stimulated by repeating the process in which students learn to apply creative making and thinking strategies. So the more frequently a student does this, the better their ability becomes. In this document, we have compiled information about creative ability. We hope this will inspire you and form a basis for entering into discussions with the school, making targeted choices in your process, and effectively formulating these choices in your project plan.

Curriculum.nu

By making artistic works, experiencing art and giving it meaning, students develop an artistic-creative ability. This ability enables students to use their imagination in making and thinking strategies.

Artistic ability is focused on the imagination, or portrayal of experiences, in artistic works with the help of techniques, materials and means. Students develop creative ability in an iterative process (a process that the student undergoes multiple times), in which creative making and thinking strategies are central. Students learn to make in various ways, to think in various ways, to convey meaning in various ways, and to reflect on their own work and learning process in various ways.

Creative **making strategies** focus on skills such as playing, (intuitive) experimenting, improvising, interpreting existing work and researching (moving) image, sound, words, and movement in relation to the space or environment. A combination of these forms is also possible. Students discover the possibilities and limitations of materials and means, make choices and learn to express themselves in an artistically-creative manner.

Creative **thinking strategies** focus on investigating, critical and philosophical questioning, and analysing artistic expressions. Students are encouraged to put themselves in another's shoes and to learn to adopt different points of view. In dialogue with fellow students and professionals, students learn to formulate thoughts, underpin views, and apply technical concepts.

The broad skills used in this process are as follows:

- way of thinking and acting:
creative thinking and practical action, problem-solving thinking and practical action, critical thinking
- ways of interacting with others
communication, cooperation, social and cultural skills
- ways of knowing yourself
orientating on yourself, your studies and your career path

To read more, go to www.curriculum.nu (building blocks/Art & Culture curriculum element).

TNO research

TNO (Netherlands Organisation for Applied Research) has conducted research into creative ability (TNO 2015R11421). Some points from the research are presented below, which explain the importance of creative ability, the competencies one should consider, and the role schools have in this.

Our society is changing from an industrial society to an information or knowledge society. In order to prepare young people for this, they must develop competences that are needed in the knowledge society. Not only the collection and exchange of knowledge is important, but also the definition of the meaning of the information (interpretation).

Young people must be trained for jobs that do not yet exist. It is assumed that these jobs will require new competencies: the 21st century skills of cooperation, communication, ICT literacy, social and/or cultural skills. In addition, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills are mentioned.

Students are more motivated when their creative abilities are put to good use. Then their learning gains depth and quality, and performance improves as a result. Creativity contributes to problem solving with its focus on exploring the problem (curiosity), and devising and playing with solutions (divergent thinking).

There are many definitions of creativity, but not one is unanimously accepted. However, there are principles that are supported by many definitions:

- creativity is necessary to be successful
- creativity can be developed
- creativity has levels
- creative characteristics of an individual are perceivable
- creativity is complex and multifaceted
- creativity is strongly influenced by context and social factors

Creativity can be developed. Therefore, it can also be measured. In order to gain more insight into the influence of the context, TNO has focused on measuring the generic competences of creative ability at the individual level, and on mapping out the support students experience when using creative ability.

The competences involved in creative ability are as follows:

- curious
deliberately taking the time to not act immediately, asking yourself what the situation is, asking questions, exploring/problems
- resourceful
devising various solution possibilities, playing with solution possibilities, making new things, creating new combinations, trusting hunches/intuition
- persistent
pushing on when encountering difficulties, dealing with uncertainty/daring to leave questions open, daring to fail
- daring to be different
allowing yourself to choose a different path (even when others think it is a bad idea), courage, self-confidence, assertiveness, individuality
- interacting with others
giving and receiving solicited and unsolicited feedback on the process, the result; sharing your product or idea, learning from others
- output oriented
critical reflection on product and process, learning by doing, learning to make decisions, convergent thinking, meeting own quality standards, eye for detail
- taking pride in your work
communicating your product, trusting your ideas

The school (influence of context) plays an important role in the following:

- direction
the degree to which schools make clear what creative ability is, how students can use it and what is expected of students in this regard
- space
the degree to which students feel they are given the space to use their creative potential
- support
the degree to which students feel supported by the school to use and increase their creative abilities

TNO conducted the study among students of vmbo-T, havo and vwo courses.

38% of the students scored as being creatively capable to very capable (high score on all competences)

11% of the students scored as being less creatively capable (low score on all competences)

The rest scored in between (high and low scores on different competences). Students following a lower education give themselves a lower score on most competences of creative ability than students following higher education. According to the research, this could be related to the intelligence factor, but it could also be caused by the fact that students in lower types of education may be less challenged to use their creative abilities (by teaching materials, work methods, or teachers' didactic methods).

Schools indicate that they are looking for effective interventions to apply to educational practice. There is particularly a shortage of interventions with an integral approach, in which teaching materials, work methods and didactic methods are used in conjunction. So here's a stimulating challenge for applicants to the Culture Education Scheme for vmbo, vso, and pro education programmes!

The full research report can be found at www.tno.nl

Want to see an example of how you can apply creative ability in education? Then get inspired at www.creatievermogenutrecht.nl

