
October 1972

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Recommended Citation

Champine, Mary Loretta (1972) "Creative Teaching," *Michigan Reading Journal*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 3 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mrj/vol6/iss3/3>

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CREATIVE TEACHING

By Mary Loretta Champine

A creative teacher is a person who stimulates another to use his own talents, abilities and desires for his own improvement and enjoyment, as well as to share this progress with others. Millions of children each year experience this surge forward because of just such a person lending his effort and encouragement.

What does a creative teacher do? How could he help a youngster improve in the academic subjects? Let's look at a few of the techniques and activities that he would use.

A good listener is a good learner. Let the child talk! Seemingly endless chatter of a child is in reality a mirror of his thoughts, feelings, frustrations, fears, hope, humor and every facet of human emotion. Sincere interest in this exchange of communication is laid on a foundation of trust. The teacher has been a "good listener" and consequently has become a "good learner." He has learned to perceive the needs of this youngster.

Oftentimes the anxieties and trepidations that have stymied a child's progress may be resolved by having the opportunity to talk through a problem with someone. With the release from this oppressive burden the youngster is now ready to devote his time and energy to a project that requires physical activity.

The time of the year will usually lend itself to a subject of interest. Spring and Summer find baseball, outside games, swimming and fishing receiving much attention by the younger set. Fall and Winter receive a rise in attention for football, skiing, snow games and sledding.

The creative teacher is clever and keen in finding one of these subjects to talk about with the youngster. An example of this may be: Football. Stimulation for a subject must begin with knowledge already known. Sharing the scores, humorous plays, popular teams, etc., that have appeared in the daily paper can be a good beginning. Talking about a "favorite player" now brings the subject and the child in perfect focus.

Encouraging the making of a football team out of clay, pipe cleaners or paper mache helps the child to direct his attentions to his subject. As his project continues he'll find that looking through papers, magazines and books will help him give his figures the correct stance. Little by little he'll read the captions of the pictures and hopefully will begin to read a little more about his topic as he continues with his team.

Rather than have all the information he has seen end up in a stack of papers tied up for a paper drive, activities for saving all those pictures and articles and placing them in a scrapbook can be initiated. A scrapbook, for some unknown reason, never reaches its potential until it is filled from cover to cover. The maker of one seems to be filled with an unknown drive to have every page and space filled. If after exhausting all the papers, programs and other materials there is still room in the book, a child may wish to draw well known players. Each picture should have a title to accompany it. Perhaps it may be only a phrase, but these are the words and ideas that the child is able to read and understand.

Many skills are introduced and

developed throughout the project. The creative teacher helps each child to know how he can think, plan, talk and enjoy his work. Each individual will progress at a different rate, but most important of all, he will progress. Many results can be seen and heard. It may be very difficult to measure the amount of growth on a test, but to the perceptive teacher and interested parent, it is very noticeable.

Perhaps this is really the first time that this particular child has had concrete material that depicts so much of his time and effort. He only needs

to see his bulging scrapbook and his team set up in the classroom, for other children to see and enjoy, to know that this is his accomplishment. Self-confidence is indeed a great cure for many ills.

Every person has tremendous potential! The creative teacher is much like an explorer and pioneer. It is his job to find the seed of interest, to nurture and water it with patience and understanding, and to admire and praise the finished product as it radiates the beauty of a blossom as it appears in full splendor!

(Mary Champine is a teacher at the
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