

# Emer Beamer @ Unexpect

Social Designer & Educator: Social Good project design in Afghanistan, Kenya, Nigeria, the Netherlands and Ireland.

## Can you measure Creativity at Schools and should we try?

Posted on August 30, 2013 by EmerBeamer

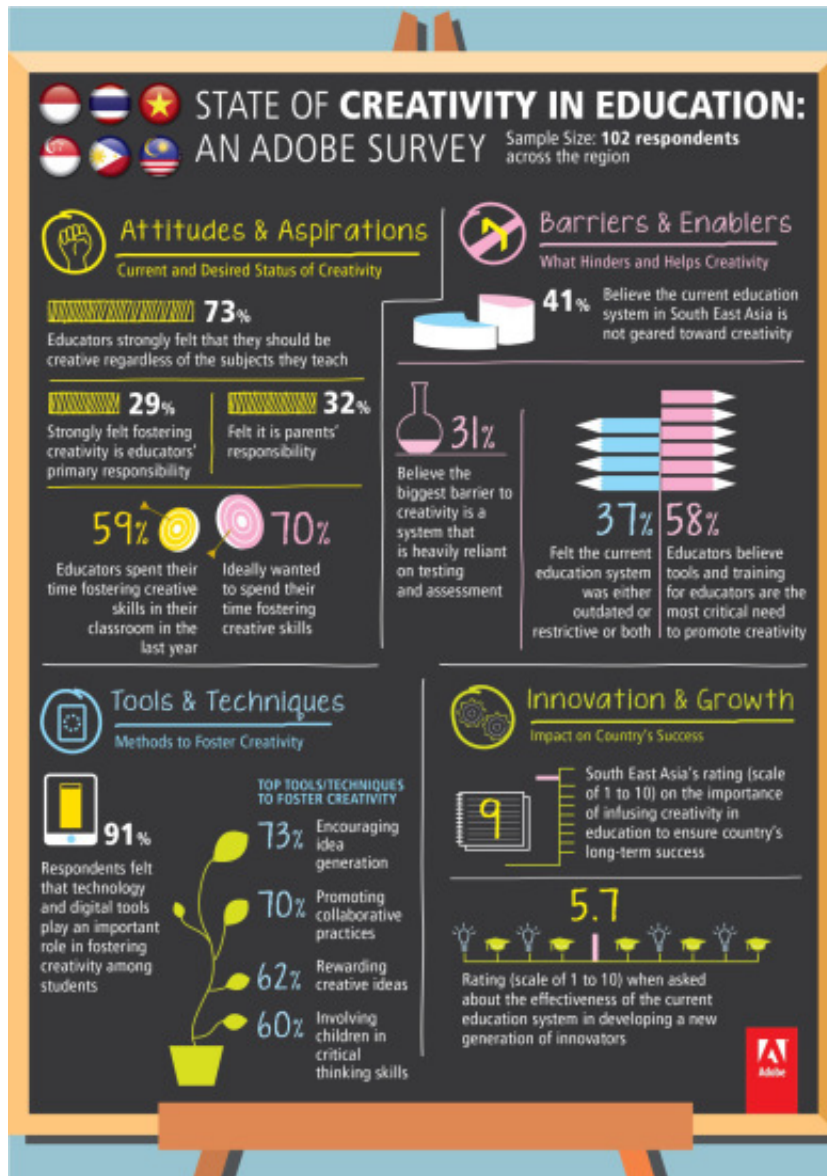
Levels of appreciation for creativity and innovation have risen sharply in the last 15 years, largely due to the claimed positive impact (<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/jobs-and-economy/2011/10/global-creativity-index/229/>) it is supposed to have on economic growth. Yet people have appreciated creativity as an innate (not just functional) quality for a long time, think of Graham Wallas on the Four Stages of Creativity ([Graham Wallas on the Four Stages of Creativity, 1926](#)) from 1926 or back further Leonardo Da Vinci, 'The painter has the Universe in his mind and hands.' – Leonardo da Vinci

So are the recent calls (US, European, South Korea) for school systems to be measured in an index of creativity likely to be a good thing? presuming we agree that the aim is to enhance and cultivate children's innate creative beings? And especially given that tests ala the SAT(US) or CITO(NL) or PISA (International) which measure proficiency in language comprehension, reading, writing and maths are regularly cited as the main obstacle to developing creativity at schools. And there lies the crux:

**How might we measure creativity in a way that is formative?**

The state of Massachusetts in the US is exploring ([http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2012/02/states\\_exploring\\_a\\_creativity.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2012/02/states_exploring_a_creativity.html)) the idea, their approach is measure inputs than outputs, that is, to gauge the extent to which schools

provide opportunities that will foster creativity and innovation in young people. Adobe did a large research across educators in the Asia Pacific region and came up with findings presented in this infographic:



(<https://emerbeamer.wordpress.com/2013/08/30/can-you-measure-creativity-at-schools-and-should-we-try/information-graphic/#main>)

This year the OECD brought out a working paper, 'Progression in Student Creativity in School: First Steps Towards New Forms of Formative Assessments' PDF (<http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5k4dp59msdwk.pdf?expires=1377778876&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=F1C0C35298C1EBD279B326293C8A88B3>), the say:

*Two clear benefits of assessing progress in the development of creativity are identified: 1) teachers are able to be more precise and confident in developing young people's creativity, and 2) learners are better able to understand what it is to be creative (and to use this understanding to record evidence of their progress). The result would seem to be a greater likelihood that learners can display the full range of their creative dispositions in a wide variety of contexts.*

My favorite framework, not because of its comprehensiveness, it's not, but for looking at creative thinking is the 'Torrance Framework of Creative Thinking', which gives us these characteristics:

- Fluency. The total number of interpretable, meaningful, and relevant ideas generated in response to the stimulus.
- Flexibility. The number of different categories of relevant responses.
- Originality. The statistical rarity of the responses among the test subjects.
- Elaboration. The ability to give detail to the ideas generated.

Some of which are definitely measurable. and which I tried to do [here](https://emerbeamer.wordpress.com/2013/08/05/creative-thinking-with-8-year-olds/) (<https://emerbeamer.wordpress.com/2013/08/05/creative-thinking-with-8-year-olds/>). This is a large subject of course and to be continued.

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# One thought on “Can you measure Creativity at Schools and should we try?”

**Dick van der Wateren**

August 31, 2013 at 3:09 pm • Reply

Hi Emer. Good question: Should we measure Creativity in education? Depends what for. If a teacher wants to monitor progress of her students' progress in creativity, fine. This is what Bill Lucas et al. argue in the OECD report. If it's measured to evaluate either the teacher or the students, not so fine.

Whether it's necessary to measure creativity in students is another question. When Simon Verwer and I gave a workshop on measuring creativity (for TheCrowd.nl), our impression was that the participants were rather undecided. We all felt that finding teaching methods that stimulate students' creativity is the most urgent part. Sometimes there will be a need for measurement, but only as a formative evaluation, not for grades.

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