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978-0-521-88727-4 - Nurturing Creativity in the Classroom

Edited by Ronald A. Beghetto and James C. Kaufman

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NURTURING CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Nurturing Creativity in the Classroom is a groundbreaking collection of essays by leading scholars who examine and respond to the tension that many educators face in valuing student creativity while believing they cannot support creativity given the curricular constraints of the classroom. Is it possible for teachers to nurture creative development and expression without drifting into curricular chaos? Do curricular constraints necessarily lead to choosing conformity over creativity? This book combines the perspectives of top educators and psychologists to generate practical advice for considering and addressing the challenges of supporting creativity within the classroom. It is unique in its balance of practical recommendations for nurturing creativity and thoughtful appreciation of curricular constraints. This approach helps ensure that the insights and advice found in this collection will take root in educators' practice, rather than being construed as yet another demand placed on their overflowing plate of responsibilities.

Ronald A. Beghetto, PhD, is Associate Professor of Education Studies at the University of Oregon. His scholarship focuses on promoting creativity in K-12 classrooms and the influence of past schooling experience on K-12 teacher development. His recent publications on creativity and teacher development appear in a wide variety of scholarly journals – including *Creativity Research Journal*, *Journal of Creative Behavior*, *Creativity and Thinking Skills*, *Educational Psychologist*, *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, and *Journal of Educational Research* – and edited volumes – *Creativity and Reason in Cognitive Development*, *Creativity: From Potential to Realization*, *Creativity: A Handbook for Teachers*, *Critical Issues and Practices in Gifted Education*, and *Rethinking Gifted Education*. He serves on the editorial boards of *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*; *Journal of Creative Behavior*; and *Journal of Educational Research* and is Associate Editor for the *International Journal of Creativity and Problem Solving*. He is the 2008 recipient of the Daniel E. Berlyne Award from the American Psychological Association's Division 10. He has also received awards for excellence in teaching, including the 2005–2006 Crystal Apple Ersted Award for Outstanding Teaching from the University of Oregon.

James C. Kaufman, PhD, is Associate Professor of Psychology at the California State University at San Bernardino, where he directs the Learning Research Institute. His research broadly focuses on nurturing and encouraging creativity. He is specifically interested in creativity's role in fairness, everyday creativity, increasing creativity in the classroom, and the structure and assessment of creativity. He is also interested in related topics such as intelligence, personality, motivation, and thinking styles. Kaufman is the author or editor of sixteen books, either published or in press, including *Creativity 101*, *Essentials of Creativity Assessment* (with Jonathan Plucker and John Baer), *International Handbook of Creativity* (with Robert Sternberg), and *Applied Intelligence* (with Robert Sternberg and Elena Grigorenko). His research has been featured and discussed in the articles or broadcasts of CNN, NPR, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New Yorker*, and the BBC. Kaufman is a founding coeditor of the official journal for the APA's Division 10, *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, and edits the *International Journal for Creativity and Problem Solving*. He also is Associate Editor of *Psychological Assessment* and the *Journal of Creative Behavior*. He received the 2003 Daniel E. Berlyne Award from APA's Division 10, the 2008 E. Paul Torrance Award from the National Association of Gifted Children, and the 2009 Early Career Research Award from the Western Psychological Association.

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*This book is dedicated, with much love, to Jeralynn – my wife, best friend,
and most ardent supporter.*

– RAB

*To my wife's parents, fellow university educators
Joseph and Jean Katz,
with love and gratitude for welcoming me into their family,
and to her sister, Cynthia,
as she begins her own journey as a classroom teacher.*

– JCK

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PREFACE

In addition to being creativity researchers, both of us are fathers of young children. As we watched Olivia and Jacob develop, the importance of an educational system that values creativity has become increasingly salient. Our children have an advantage in that their fathers value creativity (perhaps too much!). Like so many other parents, we are committed to providing diverse learning opportunities for our children. However, this commitment is not enough.

As college professors, both of us have seen many types of students. We see the student who is utterly convinced she is not creative and yet surprises herself by sharing a profoundly creative idea in class or on an assignment. Another student believes he is not creative and initially has no interest in cultivating his creativity. Yet another sees herself as a creative musician but fails to see any creativity in science or mathematics. It takes time and effort for these students to shake off their (mis)conceptions about creativity.

Then, there are the students we never see, those who have had limited opportunities to develop their creative potential. Not only do these students fail to find success in school, often for capricious and unjust reasons, but they may also believe that they lost what little spark of creativity and curiosity they had before entering formal schooling.

Finally, there are those students who have been mentored, supported by inspirational teachers, and (when appropriate) left alone to develop their creative potential. We are not too worried about these students; however, they, too, should not be forgotten. It is our hope that this book inspires educators, parents, and researchers to ensure that all students have an opportunity to find, nurture, and sustain their creative potential.

Such a goal is ambitious and one that we cannot hope to accomplish alone. We therefore selected contributors who we not only respected and admired but who we thought could most directly address the challenge of supporting creativity in the classroom. We hope that you will enjoy and draw as much insight and inspiration from these essays as we have. We close the book with a coda that highlights twenty key points and repeated motifs across the chapters.

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The authors thank Jonathan Plucker and Robert Sternberg, who were both wonderful mentors.

Ron would like to thank his colleagues in the University of Oregon's Department of Education Studies for their collegiality and support – in particular, his chair Jerry Rosiek and his dean Mike Bullis for their leadership and encouragement and all his students who hold great potential for transforming the future of education through their own commitments to creative and inspiring teaching. He would also like to thank his family, in particular, his mother Teresa, his sister Christina and her family, and his wife Jeralynn and daughter Olivia for the love and support they provide on a daily basis.

James would like to thank his CSUSB family for consistent and meaningful support – colleagues Mark Agars, Allen Butt, Susan Daniels, and Mihaela Popescu; his chair Robert Cramer, his dean Jamal Nassar, and his president Al Karnig; Stacy Brooks, Stephanie Loera, Jane Rowland, and the rest of the unfathomably good administrative support staff; and his students, whose many pathways to excellence inspire him every day. He also would like to thank his family for their love and support, especially his parents Alan and Nadeen, his sister Jennie and her family, his wife Allison, and his son Jacob.