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Creativity is a multifaceted asset that can be nurtured and developed in the classroom. Cultivating student creativity is an integral part of 21ˢᵗ century educational initiatives that support active student learning (Partnership for 21ˢᵗ Century Learning, 2015) and counter the banking model of education (Freire & Ramos, 1970). Creativity is also considered "the most important determinant of innovation" (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018, p. 242). It is therefore not surprising that most educators indicate that they value student creativity and that the majority of work environments require creativity skills for employment. Nevertheless, *Developing Creativity in the Classroom* presents research that suggests that creativity is not well understood conceptually or practically. This book helps clarify misconceptions about creativity and also guides educators on how to support creativity for deeper student learning and engagement.

The authors of *Developing Creativity in the Classroom* provide their readers with a comprehensive study of creativity. Teachers,
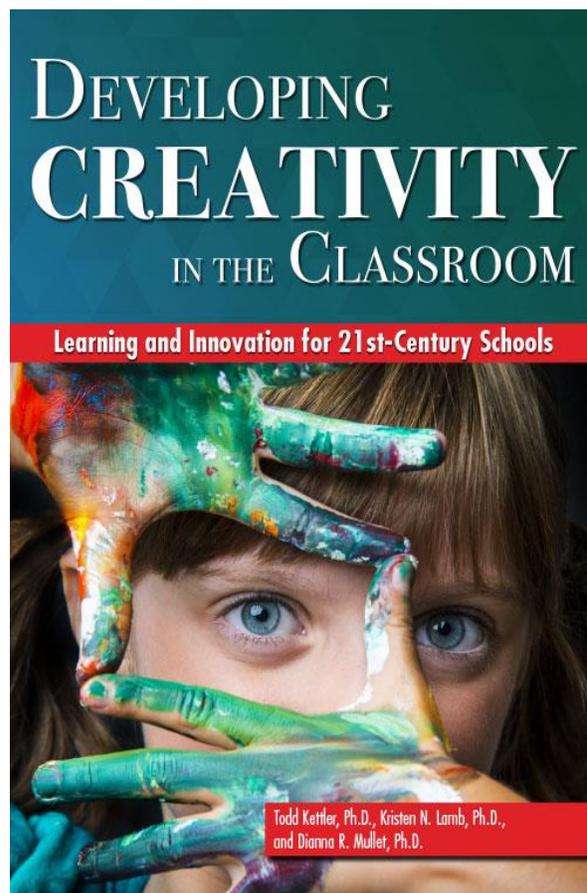
education leaders, educational researchers, and graduate and undergraduate students interested in creativity would all benefit from reading this book. *Developing Creativity in the Classroom* is divided into four sections. The first section presents a conceptual and historical view of creativity, including how the concept of creativity was conceived in Ancient Greece. The second section covers practical and effective creativity-enhancing teaching strategies for teachers who want to learn about implementing a creative pedagogy. In the third section, the authors specify ways that creativity can be developed in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Lastly, the authors make suggestions for developing creativity in education in systematic ways, such as carefully considering curriculum implementation and in-service professional learning.

Several prominent themes in this book are important to consider when thinking about how to support student creativity. First, I highlight common misperceptions regarding creativity that can inadvertently suppress student creativity and innovation. Second, I share the authors' multidimensional conception of creativity, along with general strategies that can nurture creativity in students. Lastly, I present examples for supporting student creativity in the different content areas.

A common myth is that creativity is an innate trait and that little can be done to change this. Educators who believe this might think or say something like "My students just don't have a creative bone in their bodies" or "She's naturally very creative" about their students. Believing this myth prevents teachers from nurturing creative thinking in students. A more accurate perspective is that "creativity is a skill that can be developed with instruction, modeling, and opportunity" (p. 20). That creativity is enigmatic and often comes as Eureka moments of inspiration is another common myth. When educators accept this as true, they are less likely to

believe that they can play a role in developing their students' creativity. Lastly, many people believe that creativity is primarily expressed in artistic ways; if educators believe this, then it makes it very difficult for them to attempt to nurture creativity outside of the art classroom. A more appropriate view is that creativity can exist in all content areas, and that it can thrive outside of the arts. The authors urge us to understand that creativity can be developed "through discipline, commitment, and practice in environments that support and encourage creative thinking" (p. 20). It's important for educators to remember that creativity fuels innovation in many fields, including biology, business, science, technology, economics, and marketing, to name a few. In short, educators have a large role to play in developing student creativity and innovation, but first they must rise above misinformation and myths regarding creativity.

Current research on creativity also suggests that creativity is complex and multifaceted. The authors of *Developing Creativity in the Classroom* encourage educators to think of student creativity as "creativity potential" instead of thinking of it as an innate quality. The concept of creativity potential is an important one, because it inspires educators to consider multiple perspectives on creativity and to reflect about different and individualized ways that they can help develop and nurture it in their students. The authors suggest that creativity is "best conceptualized not as a personality trait or general ability but as a behavior resulting from particular constellations of *personal characteristics, cognitive abilities, and social environments* [emphasis added]" (p. 82).

To nurture the personal characteristics related to creativity, educators can implement classroom tasks that relate to students' openness to new experiences and their tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. Essentially, creativity-enhancing assignments are open-ended, exciting, different, connect to

relevant, real-life situations, and engage students in autonomous exploration and self-expression. To shore up cognitive abilities, teachers can develop school assignments that encourage students to think divergently, and to take risks when sharing ideas in the classroom or when doing other school tasks. Basically, to develop students' creativity from a cognitive perspective, educators can implement assignments that ask students to think critically, question assumptions, change perspectives, and brainstorm together and individually to come up with a multitude of ideas to solve problems. To foster a creative environment, educators can create an intellectually safe space and encourage collegial, positive relationships. Educators can strive to have a classroom climate where all students feel valued and respected and where students feel encouraged to take risks, make mistakes, and share and advocate for their ideas, without feeling judged.

The authors support the notion that student creativity may look different depending on the content area.

- During language arts instruction, students can create original stories or videos that question a belief that is deeply meaningful to them. Students can also translate works from one language to another, as this requires critical thinking and linguistic and cultural perspective taking.
- In mathematics, students can engage in brainstorming multiple ways of approaching mathematical problems. Additionally, to support deeper learning, students can be encouraged to elaborate on their mathematical logic irrespective of correct or incorrect answers.
- In science classes, students can be involved in authentic learning by self-selecting problems to empirically investigate and designing various method possibilities for their investigations, such as a library search or a lab experiment.
- During social studies classes, students can be part of thought experiments that connect current events with social studies concepts, such as immigrant populations, globalization, and consumerism. Students can also be called to take informed social actions to better understand a pressing topic in their local community.

The authors of *Developing Creativity in the Classroom* clarify many taken-for-granted myths that stifle creativity development in schools. They provide their readers with smart and practical guidance on how to create a classroom environment where creativity can thrive and how to implement teaching strategies that can enhance creativity in the different content areas. The book makes clear that teachers play a critical role in student creativity and that developing and nurturing student creativity and innovation requires intentionality, careful planning, and practice.

References

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About the Reviewer

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