Creativity and Education: Why it Matters

November 7, 2012
BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY
METHODOLOGY

Edelman Berland conducted a ten-minute online survey among a sample of n=1,000 Americans ages 25+ who are college-educated and full-time (salaried) employees. The margin of error for this sample is ±3.1% at the 95% confidence level. The online survey was fielded between October 17 – October 19, 2012.
KEY FINDINGS
KEY HEADLINES

- 57% of college educated professionals believe creativity is a learned skill that can be learned in their career while 65% believe it is a personality trait that is innate.

- 88% agree creativity should be built into education curriculums and 72% agree they were more focused on subject matter than creative thinking in school.

- 85% agree creative thinking is critical for problem solving in their career but nearly one-third (32%) do not feel comfortable thinking creatively at work.

78%...creativity is important to their current career

71%...creativity should be a taught course
DETAILED FINDINGS
Creative Thinking
When asked unaided, most educated professionals associate *creative thinking* with thinking out of the box, or the ability to come up with innovative ideas.

Q1. In your own words, what is "creative thinking"? [Open-Ended].

**Base: Total (n= 1,000)**
Younger professionals are more likely to associate *creative thinking* with being visual, while older generations associate it with ideas and results.

Q2. Which of the following phrases best defines "creative thinking"?

Base: Total (n= 1,000), Male (n=523), Female (n=477), Age 25-44 (n=769), Age 45+ (n=231)

* Indicates statistically significant difference
While most recognize the value of creativity to society, Education majors are more likely to agree creativity is an innate skill.

Q4. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
Base: Total (n=1,000), Biological Science Majors (n=85), Education Majors (n=91), Engineering Majors (n=120)  
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DETAILED FINDINGS
Creative Thinking & Education
Many teachers encouraged creative thinking with inventive approaches to learning that were challenging and thought-provoking.

"Encouragement to express ideas freely - without fear of acceptance/rejection. I learned the value and impact of acknowledgement and validation."

"I had a science teacher that told us on the first day of school that "curiosity is the beginning of science." She said if you don't ask questions or wonder why... or why not... you will never make new discoveries."

"We approached the texts and course material from new perspectives, engaged our senses and presented information and understanding of course concepts through mixed media rather than just papers or exams."

"My favorite college professor didn’t just lecture about science... I was forced to see his lessons as not only static information on a page but dynamic interactions that were constantly in motion."

Q5. Thinking of your favorite teacher or professor while in school, what did they do to encourage creative thinking? What did you learn from them? [Open-Ended].
Base: Total (n=1,000)
Nearly three-quarters of college educated professionals agree creativity should be a taught course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree NET</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for educators to encourage creative thinking in their students</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>There’s more to success than learning educational subject matter</td>
<td>91%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity should be built into education curriculums</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I had more exposure to creative thinking as a student</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school, I was more focused on subject matter than creative thinking</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative thinking should be a taught class like math and science</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is enough opportunity in school for students to demonstrate creativity</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic test scores are the best indicators for success in school and beyond</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements
Base: Total (n=1,000), Male (n=523), Female (n=477), Age 25-44 (n=769), Age 45+ (n=231)
Subjects regarded as making important contributions to *creative thinking* include art and music, but science and mathematics also score highly.

Courses Important to Creative Thinking

- **Art**: 79%
- **Music**: 76%
- **English**: 70%
- **Science**: 69%
- **Philosophy**: 68%
- **Drama**: 65%
- **Mathematics**: 59%
- **Psychology**: 58%
- **History**: 50%
- **Foreign Language**: 48%

**Important NET** [Top 3 Box]

Q7. On a 1 to 10 scale where 1 is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and 10 is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT how important are each of the following course areas in terms of their contribution to creative thinking?

Base: Total (n=1,000), Male (n=523), Female (n=477), Age 25-44 (n=769), Age 45+ (n=231)

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DETAILED FINDINGS

Creative Thinking & Your Career
Creative thinking is frequently used when interacting with clients, creating solutions or developing innovative strategies.

"As a manager, instead of requiring the same success factors for all of my employees, I need to tailor my expectations to their strengths, allowing them to expand their roles in unique ways."

"I have worked though various floor plans for houses and without a creative mind a floor plan would just be a standard box with out any real distinct look."

"I’m a grant writer and need to come up with creative ways to tell the organization’s story so that we can reach donors based on their individual interests."

"I am in sales, so I need to think of creative approaches to appeal to my clients. I basically need to put myself in their shoes and understand more of the psychology behind their decisions."

"I utilize creative thinking in the conceptualization process of creating animations. It is very important to create a rough but somewhat detailed painting/sketch that depicts what you want to convey to your team."

Q9. Thinking about your current career, please describe an experience where you utilized creative thinking? [Open-Ended].

Base: Total (n= 1,000)
While many agree on the significance of creativity in their careers, fewer professionals believe creative thinking is a skill that can be learned on the job.

- It is important for management to encourage creative thinking in their employees: 89%
- Creative thinking is critical for problem solving in my career: 85%
- I wish I had more creative ability: 78%
- I wish I had more exposure to creative thinking in my career: 68%
- Creative thinking experiences in school have influenced me in my career: 66%
- The ability to think creatively is a "soft skill" (i.e. innate, behavioral ability) in my career: 65%
- Creative thinking experiences in school helped prepare me for my career: 64%
- I wish there were more outlets for me to display my creative thinking in my career: 62%
- The ability to think creatively is a "hard skill" (i.e. something than can be learned) in my career: 57%
- Creative thinking does not have a place in my career: 33%
- I don't feel comfortable thinking creatively in my career: 32%

Q10. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:
Base: Total (n=1,000), Male (n=523), Female (n=477), Biological Science Majors (n=85), Social Science Majors (n=101), Engineering Majors (n=120), Education Majors (n=91)
Creativity is more important now than most professionals believed it would be in college

Q11. How important did you feel creativity was going to be in your career while you were in college?

Q12. How important do you feel creativity is to your career now?

Base: Total (n=1,000)
The ability to work with and manage others internally is in need of more creativity than working with external clients.

Q13. Which of the following aspects of your career are in need of more creativity?

Base: Total (n=1,000), Male (n=523), Female (n=477), Age 25-34 (n=551), Age 35+ (n=449)
Creativity is regarded as one of the top three personality traits most important to career success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Persistence</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fearlessness</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
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25% of education majors
21% of professionals 25-44 vs. 14% aged 45+
30% of engineering majors vs. 9% of biological sciences majors

Q14. Outside of job-specific skills what is the most important trait to success in your field?
Base: Total (n=1,000), Age 25-44 (n=769), Age 45+ (n=231), Engineering Majors (n=120), Biological Sciences Majors (n=85), Education Majors (n=91)
**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE (2)**

**Residential Area**
- Urban center: 29%
- Suburb: 49%
- Medium sized town: 12%
- Small town/rural area: 10%

**Children at Home**
- Yes: 39%
- No: 61%

**# of Children at Home**
- 1: 48%
- 2: 41%
- 3: 9%
- 4: 1%
- 5+: 1%