The Future of Creativity

The future generations of our modern societies are in danger. Dr. Kim of the college of William and Mary conducted a study that showed that ever since 1990, creativity scores have decreased significantly (Bonson/Merryman). By the end of the 21st century there will be very little creativity left in our society. The minds of these future generations will never reach their full mental capacity because today’s society limits creativity in our youth. The lack of natural recreational locations in big cities, a fast paced society, and the technological advances that are so accessible to our youth, will prevent future generations of creative geniuses from fully developing. This is an extremely serious issue since the future relies so heavily on today’s children, and these children will not be able to help their society with creative ideas and insight to solve the problems of the future.

In order for one to realize their full creative potential, one must be in touch with their mind. One way many people are able to find their true potential, is by spending time in nature. Studies have shown that human creativity, health, and learning ability are all improved when spending time in natural environments (Louv). Richard Louv explored these ideas when conducting a study where he found “that young people, after a few days immersed in nature, show significant cognitive improvements and a 50 percent increase in creativity” (Louv). This however seems more and more impossible because of the rapid growth of cities expanding into
natural areas. This expansion is dangerous for the creativity of our youth because as a child especially, being in nature is vital to the development of the creative parts of the brain. This is expressed in Inglis’ article regarding nature’s impact on creativity where she states “Nature helps us to think more clearly. The natural stimulation of all of our senses is considered the optimal learning environment, as opposed to the over-stimulation in a city which triggers our fight-or-flight responses.” (Inglis). Now that many more parents are raising kids in big cities, having more parks, and nature preserves is important to our future generations.

Another reason creativity is endangered is because of the fast paced society we live in that makes it so there is not one free second to think. Whether it’s youtube, where when the video ends, it automatically starts to play another one, or it’s opening up the app store where there are billions of new games to try, or it’s going on Netflix where there are always new episodes at your disposal. These things all sound so great but when looked at closely show how as a society we never take our time to think anymore. As Kate Inglis said in her article about improving and increasing creativity, “There’s no way to get that deep breath, unless we step out of our hectic, distracted lives for even a fifteen minute walk” (Inglis). It’s important to set aside time to clear one’s head instead of just bustling through life without reflecting or even really thinking. Without this reflection, it is hard for a person to grow and develop their creativity. As Susan Linn stated while talking about the easy access to everything online, “[The] stretches of having ‘nothing to do’ are exactly what foster the creative intersection of children’s inner world and their immediate surroundings” (Linn). This fast paced society is constantly having us do something new, move on to the next project, travel to a new city, go from one thing straight to another. However this is a dangerous way to live for the sake of creativity. Now that our society
is so demanding and non-stop, we don’t have the time to exercise our brains and really be creative.

A major cause of the fast paced society and it’s lack of freedom and solitude is the technological advances the new generation will grow up with. Today’s children already all have way more influences from the media in their everyday life than anyone of an older generation. When the media is telling people what they should think and believe, it’s hard for them to then create their own ideas when they have the freedom to be creative. Linn also explores this concept in her essay when she states, “Amid the glitter and noise of screen-based commercialism, we need to actively carve out commercial-free, screen free time and space for children” (Linn).

Nowadays, parents feel the need to buy their children iPads and computers, this however should not be the standard for our youth because it seriously diminishes their thinking and learning capacity. In a similar study conducted by the washington post, they found:

What children see or interact with on the screen is only a representation of things in the real world. The screen symbols aren’t able to provide as full an experience for kids as the interactions they can have with real world people and things. And while playing games with apps and computers could be considered more active than TV viewing, it is still limited to what happens between the child and a device — it doesn’t involve the whole child’s body, brain, and senses. (Strauss)

This quote indicates how the children are becoming more reliant on technology and what the media tells them, and less reliant on what they actually believe. Since such a large percent of young kids are exposed to this every day, creativity is extremely endangered.
There are some people who believe that the technological advances actually do help us to foster creativity because it helps to diffuse the information to the world. Also seeing a wide variety of influences can stimulate the mind. For example, Richard Florida wrote “The presence of other creative people [fosters creativity]... Our biggest creative breakthroughs come when people learn from, compete with, and collaborate with one another” (Florida). Others like Florida believe that since the internet is such an efficient way to share ideas it helps to increase creativity. However, this is not the case because the instantaneous information results in laziness and apathy. This is especially a problem for children, like Linn states, “Children constantly bombarded with stimulation are so busy reacting, they never learn how to generate” (Linn). This is so problematic for young kids because they are just starting to develop methods for learning, and critical thinking. Therefore, having all this information just a click away causes kids to never learn how to creatively think of the answer to a problem since their immediate response would be to just look it up online.

If we don’t change things now, our future generation of leaders and problem-solvers will lack one fundamental skill: creativity. This has been on a decline for many years and it’s because of the lack of nature in big cities, the fast paced nature of our modern society, and the advances in technology that allow the media to influence young children. However, it doesn’t have to be this way. If our society collectively limits the technology used by children, and increases the amount of parks, nature preserves, and hiking trails, there is still a chance creativity will go back to increasing. The future depends of the creative ability of today’s children.
Works cited


