

Building Creativity

Kansas Youth Leadership Forum 2015

Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking

- **Fluency** - The total number of relevant ideas generated in response to a stimulus (count the responses)
- **Originality** - The statistical rarity of the responses (see which ones are unique)
- **Eloquence** - The amount of detail in the responses (share/write more information about the response)

Activities

Verbal Task with Verbal Stimuli

Vocabulary

1. Pick a letter (Scrabble letters work well)
2. Pick a category of items
3. Come up with as MANY items starting with the letter and pertaining to the category as you can
4. **Eloquence:** Pick one and write a paragraph

Category Ideas: food, animals, 4-H project ideas, my community, my Family, blue things, music

Alternative Uses

1. Pick a common item everyone is familiar with
2. Come up with as MANY alternative uses of that object as possible
3. **Eloquence:** Pick one and write why that is useful

Item Ideas: trash can, chair, ceiling tile, shoe, laptop, computer cable, phone, water bottle

Verbal Task with Non-Verbal Stimuli

Abstract Images

1. Find an ambiguous or abstract image
2. Come up with as MANY interesting titles as you can
3. **Eloquence:** Pick one and describe the scene shown in the image that gives it that title

Picture Ideas: line drawings, shapes, segments of a blueprint, desktop icons, microscope images

Ask and Guess

1. Pick any picture
2. List questions to ask about the picture, focusing on ones that cannot be answered just by looking at it
3. Guess the causes of the event depicted in the picture and how that helps answer the questions

Picture Ideas: previous photography entries, pictures in a newspaper/magazine, stock photography websites

Non-Verbal Task with Non-Verbal Stimuli

Complete a Drawing

1. Choose a simple drawing (a shape or squiggle)
2. Complete the drawing to make a new picture
3. **Eloquence:** Describe the scene shown in the new picture

Variation: Use a coloring book page to start

Picture Ideas: geometric shapes, logos, line drawings, common icons, stick figures, tools and hardware

Construct a Scene

1. Start with a set of shapes, blocks, pictures, etc.
2. Construct a picture or scene using those items
3. **Eloquence:** Describe the scene shown

Variation: After a short time, trade with another person and continue her or his design

Building blocks: shapes, wood blocks, toys, wrapping paper, magazine clippings, modeling clay

Tips and Tricks

Creativity Helpers

1. **Purpose** - Have a clear purpose or intent. It is easier to be creative if you have a clear goal or reason.
2. **Reward Absurdity**- Reward the curiosity and exploration of ideas and thoughts, no matter how absurd
3. **Independent Work** - Provide opportunity for choice and discovery independently. Most people are more creative alone than in a group
4. **Risk** - Encourage confidence in risk-taking. No harm is done if a bad idea is discussed.
5. **Redefine** - Redefine the problems & solutions for new ideas and ways of approaching the problem
6. **Expand & Remix** - Start with many ideas and freely expand on and remix them without fear of failure
7. **Restrict Yourself** - Limit the words/tools/colors/shapes you can use to express an idea
8. **Distance** - Think of the problem as far away to see it from a greater distance and see larger solutions
9. **Daydream** - Allow your mind to wander while thinking of ideas to tap into your subconscious self
10. **Make it a Habit** - It is easier to be creative if it is a regularly practiced habit instead of a seldom skill

Creativity Hinderers

1. ***“That won’t work!”*** - Shooting down ideas because they are not feasible kills the creative flow and makes people scared to share their own ideas for fear of being rejected.
2. ***“We’ve never done it that way!”*** - It is sometimes necessary to abandon the ways of the past and try new things. Just because it has always been done one way doesn’t mean it is the best way.
3. ***“That idea isn’t relevant!”*** - All ideas are relevant if they help lead to a solution. Don’t worry about quickly discarding bad ideas while being creative; that can be done when ideas are reviewed later.
4. ***“I don’t understand your idea!”*** - Not all good ideas can be explained easily. Sometimes it takes several tries for everyone to understand a new idea. Nobody understood math at first; that doesn’t make it bad
5. ***“Let’s find a solution everyone agrees on first!”*** - This is a classic example of groupthink. Just because one person’s idea isn’t popular doesn’t mean it should be discarded. Creativity doesn’t need agreement.
6. ***“She spoke loudest so her idea must be great!”*** - Just because someone speaks loudly and clearly about an idea doesn’t make it any better than an idea shared quietly. Make sure everyone is heard
7. ***“I’m not very creative.”*** - Self-doubt can prevent many good ideas from being shared. Encourage participation from everyone, even if they do so independently and anonymously.
8. ***“That is too much work!”*** - Sometimes the best ideas require lots of hard work. Don’t discount good ideas just because they aren’t easy. They may lead to better ideas later down the road.
9. ***“What if my idea doesn’t work?”*** - Fear of failure can cause ideas to disappear before they are shared. Create an environment where failure is *encouraged* and *expected* as part of the creative process
10. ***“They’ll make fun of my idea!”*** - Creativity does not require criticism. Make sure all ideas are considered based on their individual merits without attacking either the idea or the creator.

Sources:

<http://www.byrdseed.com/building-confidence-in-creativity/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torrance_Tests_of_Creative_Thinking
<http://www.sparringmind.com/creative-thinking/>

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Presentation: http://bit.ly/kylf_creative

Handout (PDF): http://bit.ly/kylf_handout

