

THE STATE OF CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION: A SPECIAL REPORT*



HOW EDUCATORS
ARE HANDLING

THE CREATIVITY

CHALLENGE



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FOREWORD

“The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn’t need to be reformed -- it needs to be transformed. The key to this transformation is not to standardize education, but to personalize it, to build achievement on discovering the individual talents of each child, to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can naturally discover their true passions.”

– Sir Ken Robinson; author and international advisor on education

Take a roomful of educators. Draw them into a discussion about the future of schools and emerging trends in education. Then throw in a question about creativity and watch the room splinter into an array of different ideas and viewpoints.

There’s something about creativity. It can liven up a debate and stir up many an opinion, but still elude consensus at the end.

That is because while educators have long acknowledged that creativity should be a part of classroom interaction, they have not always been able to agree on how best it can be integrated. And then, of course, there is the worry that the very act of structuring a program to include creativity goes against its free-form nature. Still, it is clearly not an elective any longer. Creativity expert, Sir Ken Robinson who has emerged as the leading voice of the educational overhaul movement, says that ‘creativity is as important as literacy and should be given the same status’. Sir Robinson has been largely critical of the ‘one size fits all’ approach used in education and has said that such standardization is designed to kill creativity and inventiveness.

But what exactly constitutes creativity? Creativity is not easily summed up or defined but it is often associated with a set of qualities and propensities: risk-taking, acceptance of ambiguity, originality. Other questions then arise: Are we doing anything to foster it currently in schools? Are we doing enough? If not, why?

The people best equipped to handle these and related questions are educators – the individuals on the ground on a daily basis, across schools and institutions everywhere. And so this **State of Creativity in Education** survey is designed to capture their views on what is happening currently and what is still possible in the realm of creative pedagogy.

Among the key insights that came to the fore through the survey is a keen desire to do more. Armed with the right tools, those surveyed were confident that they could turn the current education model on its head and allow their students more room to explore, ideate, and set their imaginations free.

In this redefined model, technology can definitely be an enabling factor. Its speed and adaptability lend themselves to customizing classroom exercises and activities for each student. And it will ultimately liberate students from the standardized rigour that has come to dominate their lives in schools.

Through this survey, we now know the state of creativity in our educational institutions. It is now up to us to make it better.

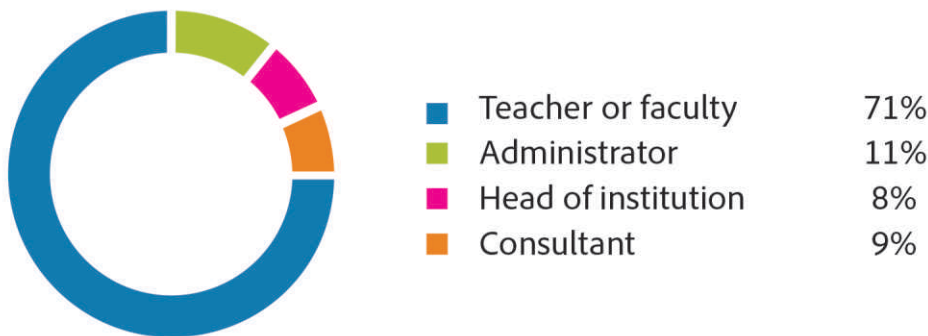
Peter McAlpine
Senior Director – Education (APAC)
Adobe

SUMMARY

The **State of Creativity in Education** survey was conducted among individuals in the field of education across 13 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The survey was carefully formulated to probe respondents on their attitudes, goals, challenges and needs in the area. The exercise led to some revealing insights into sentiments and views surrounding creativity in the classroom.

SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY

The countries or regions covered by the survey included Australia-, New Zealand, Greater China (including China, Hong Kong and Taiwan), India, Southeast Asia (comprising Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore) and South Korea. Faculty, administrators and other members of the primary, secondary and higher educational structures of their countries, answered a series of fifteen questions related to creativity in schools: current practices, goals, the impact on broader innovation and more.



Roles/Positions of Respondents



Level of Respondents' Institutions

HIGHLIGHTS

The survey uncovered strong support for creativity in the classroom, as well as the role of the educator in nurturing it. Respondents also predominantly expressed the view that not enough was being done in this area currently.

To a large degree, respondents were critical of the prevailing education system, characterizing it as 'outdated' and 'restrictive' and not sufficiently supportive of fostering creativity. The constraints imposed by this system, along with a lack of proper resources and training, were identified as the primary roadblocks to infusing creativity in the classroom.

Respondents did identify a number of current classroom practices that were based on risk taking, exploration and a less structured ideology. These included activities such as 'encouraging idea generation' and fostering 'critical thinking skills' in students. Respondents also pointed to digital tools and technology as being an important enabling force in this area.

LEADING SURVEY SENTIMENTS

- **Driven to do more:** Those surveyed revealed a strong desire to infuse creativity into the curriculum and classroom.
- **Creativity matters in education:** Respondents highlighted its impact on broader innovation and ultimately, on national success.
- **Feeling constrained by current system:** Many feel the current education system is either outdated or restrictive and not geared to support creativity.
- **Gap between goals and reality:** Those surveyed spent less time fostering creative skills in their classrooms than they would have liked.
- **Limited support:** A lack of resources, tools and training are identified as the biggest barriers to incorporating creativity in the curriculum.
- **Technology can help:** Digital tools and technology are important in enabling or facilitating creative pedagogy.



SECTION 1: ATTITUDES AND ASPIRATIONS

Respondents largely held the view that creativity should be a key part of pedagogy, regardless of the subject being taught. A majority would like to have more room for creativity in all the subjects that they taught, including ones traditionally associated with formal theory and structure. These sentiments could be gauged from responses such as those below:

Educators should be creative no matter what subject area they teach - 62% strongly agree

Not all subjects are conducive to teaching creativity - 31% strongly disagree

Percent seeking opportunities for creativity in all subjects taught (not just arts and humanities) - 48%

Additionally, a little more than a quarter of respondents surveyed strongly disagreed with the statement that the value of creativity depends on the subject taught. By implication, respondents seem to attribute a broader role for creativity in education.

Respondents were also questioned on who they felt was primarily responsible for fostering it. A significantly higher number of respondents (35% versus 21%) held that educators, rather than parents, were primarily responsible for this activity. However, the response split indicates a certain amount of role ambiguity when it comes to fostering creativity.

Despite these reservations, respondents clearly want to do more in this area. There is a thirteen percentage point difference between the time they wish to spend and what they actually do spend on creativity-oriented classroom activities. The average self-reported time spent on fostering creative skills in the classroom in the last twelve months was 45% while respondents would ideally have liked to spend closer to 58% of their time on creativity-related activities.

We can probably conclude from this data that educators would like more freedom to infuse creativity into the classroom but they are not entirely sure whether they can do this successfully given the boundaries and restrictions imposed by the prevailing education system.



Attitudes & Aspirations

Current and Desired State of Creativity



Educators strongly felt that they should be creative regardless of the subjects they teach



Strongly felt fostering creativity is educators' primary responsibility



Strongly felt that parents are primarily responsible for creativity



45%

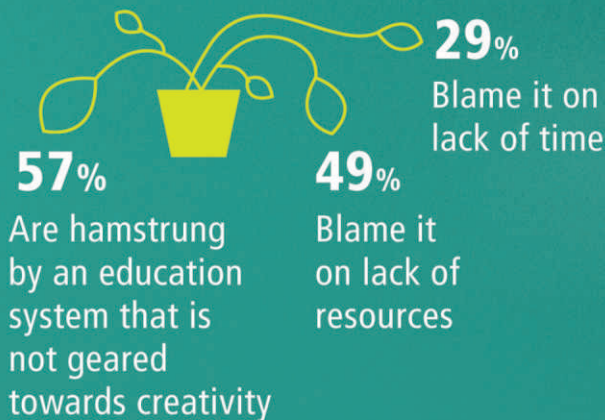
Educators spent their time fostering creative skills in their classroom in the last one year

SECTION 2: BARRIERS AND ENABLERS



Barriers & Enablers

What Hinders and Helps Creativity



Believe the biggest barrier to creativity is a system that is heavily reliant on testing and assessment



43% Felt the current education system was either outdated or restrictive or both



41% Educators believe tools and training for educators are the most critical need to promote

Respondents cited 'an education system that is too reliant on testing and assessment' as the greatest barrier to creativity. They also gave the prevailing education system in their countries mixed reviews. While roughly a **third** of all respondents acknowledged its effectiveness in 'supporting career growth', close to **43%** of them characterized it as either 'outdated' or 'restrictive' or both.

Biggest barriers to creativity (Top 3 mentioned with percent citing them)

- An education system that is too reliant on testing and assessment - **36%**
- Educators ill-equipped with tools and techniques to teach creativity - **14%**
- A misunderstanding of the importance of creativity in education - **11%**

Respondents also expressed

frustration at being unable to make much progress in this area. They felt they were hamstrung by a number of factors in their efforts to integrate creativity into the classroom.

Top three factors preventing respondents from doing more in the classroom (with percent citing them):

- The current education system is not geared toward creativity - **57%**
- There is a lack of resources - **49%**
- I do not have the time - **26%**

A significant percentage (**41%**) also felt that 'tools and training for educators' would go a long way in promoting creativity while a smaller number (**22%**) felt this could be achieved by integrating creativity into the curriculum.

In essence, respondents have the desire but not the means to do more in the classroom. They have to function within a restrictive pedagogical framework and lack the resources and specific tools they need to make creativity a bigger part of classroom interaction.

SECTION 3: TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

To the extent possible, educators are doing their best to foster creativity. Survey respondents identified a number of practices focused on independent thinking and exploration that they routinely carried out in the classroom. Developing critical thinking skills and encouraging idea generation among students were among the key activities listed in this area.

Practices currently used in the classroom (with percent citing them)

Promoting collaborative practices and team work	61%
Teaching classes such as art, drama, etc.	36%
Involving children in higher level critical thinking skills	58%
Encouraging idea generation	66%
Rewarding creative ideas	54%
Tolerating ambiguity and making mistakes	40%
Leveraging technology	40%



Tools & Techniques

Methods to Foster Creativity



85%

Respondents felt that technology and digital tools play an important role



34%

Indicated that they were very prepared to adapt their teaching methodology to leverage digital tools

Digital tools and technology are clearly viewed as a promising asset for educators with an overwhelming majority (85%) of respondents indicating that they play an important role in fostering creativity among students. A little more than a third of all respondents (34%) also felt very prepared to adapt their methodology to leverage these tools.

To sum up, educators are doing what they can with the time and resources at their disposal. They are excited about the potential of technology to better facilitate their efforts in this area.

SECTION 4:

IMPACT ON INNOVATION



Innovation & Growth

Impact on Country's Success



8.4

Rating on a scale of 1 to 10; on how important it was to infuse creativity in education to ensure their country's long-term success

5.0



Rating on a scale of 1 to 10; on the efficiency of the current education system in developing a new generation of innovators

Creativity matters. This is a sentiment that came through strongly in the survey. At least half the respondents surveyed believed that, if integrated into education, its effects would ultimately trickle down to spur innovation in the workforce, the economy, and the country at large. Respondents also gave a high rating to creativity's role in determining a country's national success.

However, when asked to evaluate how effective the current education system was in developing a new generation of innovators, respondents gave it only a middling score.

Percent who feel that creativity in education has a great deal of influence on innovation in...

<i>The national economy</i>	48%
<i>The local economy</i>	43%
<i>Communities</i>	43%
<i>The workforce</i>	47%
<i>The country as a whole</i>	49%

A significant majority (60%) also strongly agreed with the statement that 'fostering creativity in education today will fuel the economies of the future'.

However, when asked to evaluate how effective the current education system was in developing a new generation of innovators, respondents gave it only a middling score (5 on a 1 to 10 scale).

In summary, it is evident educators believe that creativity-based educational methods will transform societies and fuel economic growth. But they also feel that this potential is largely untapped in prevailing educational systems.

SECTION 5: COUNTRY ANALYSIS

SENTIMENTS ON CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION

STATE OF CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION: AN ADOBE SURVEY



Sample Size: 1014 educators representing 13 countries across Asia Pacific



creativity pulse across countries

STATEMENTS/ SENTIMENTS	TOTAL APAC	ANZ	*GREATER CHINA	INDIA	**SOUTH EAST ASIA	SOUTH KOREA
Percent of time spent on fostering creativity in last 12 months	45%	48%	40%	45%	59%	37%
Percent strongly agreeing on creativity being integral to school curricula	29%	30%	7%	29%	37%	43%
Important of creativity in education for ensuring a country's success, on a scale of 1-10	8.4	8.8	7.4	8.6	9	8.1
Percent agreeing that creativity has a great deal of impact on innovation in the workforce	47%	20%	30%	56%	55%	57%
Percent strongly agreeing that they are encouraged to foster creativity	28%	24%	11%	37%	36%	11%
Efficiency of education system at developing new generation of innovators, on a scale of 1-10	5.0	4.7	4.4	5.2	5.75	4.6
Percent strongly agreeing that educators are primarily responsible for creativity	35%	9%	51%	46%	29%	13%
Percent strongly agreeing that educators should be creative regardless of the subject they teach	62%	71%	54%	71%	73%	27%
Percent agreeing that digital tools and technology are important or very important for enabling creativity	86%	92%	70%	89%	91%	79%
Percent prepared or somewhat prepared to adapt teaching methodology to leverage digital tools	87%	93%	66%	92%	96%	77%

▲ High ▼ Low

*Greater China includes China, Taiwan and Hong Kong

**Southeast Asia includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam



*Greater China includes China, Taiwan and Hong Kong

**Southeast Asia includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND

Barriers to creativity – Top 3 factors cited:

An education system that is too reliant on testing and assessment – 39%

Educators ill-equipped with tools and techniques to teach creativity – 13%

A misunderstanding of the importance of creativity in education – 13%

Would like to do more but...: A significant percentage of respondents (37% as opposed to 26% of APAC respondents) said that they were hampered by a lack of time in their efforts to infuse more creativity into the curriculum. Other leading factors cited were the educational system (48%) and a lack of related resources (43%).

Most needed: Like the larger group, respondents from Australia-New Zealand cited the need for tools and training (45%), for integrating creativity into the curriculum (21%), as well as for reducing mandates that hamper creativity (17%).

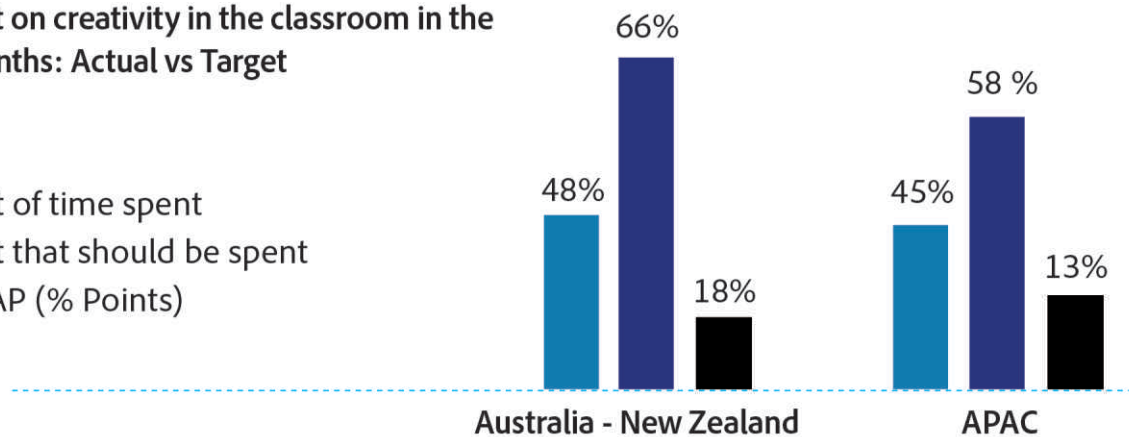
Percent that wants more opportunity for creativity in all the subjects (not just the arts, humanities or other standalone subjects)

Australia-New Zealand: 70%
Asia-Pacific: 48%

A significant majority indicated that they would like more creative freedom in all the subjects taught in schools.

Time spent on creativity in the classroom in the last 12 months: Actual vs Target

- Percent of time spent
- Percent that should be spent
- THE GAP (% Points)



Current practices in creativity:

The percentages of respondents identifying specific practices currently used in the classroom are **significantly higher** than the averages for the larger respondent group (APAC).

Current Practices	Australia - New Zealand	APAC
Promoting collaborative practices and teamwork	70%	61%
Teaching classes such as art, drama, etc.	52%	36%
Involving children in higher level critical thinking skills	81%	58%
Encouraging idea generation	74%	66%
Rewarding creative ideas	57%	54%
Tolerating ambiguity and making mistakes	64%	40%
Leveraging technology	56%	40%

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

GREATER CHINA

Barriers to creativity – Top 3 factors cited

An education system too reliant on testing and assessment – 28%

Educators restricted from straying outside the curriculum – 13%

Lack of time – 13%

Would like to do more but...: A large number of respondents (59%) said that they were hampered by an education system that was not geared toward creativity while another 53% cited a lack of resources. Other factors identified included a shortage of time and the fact that it was not a priority.

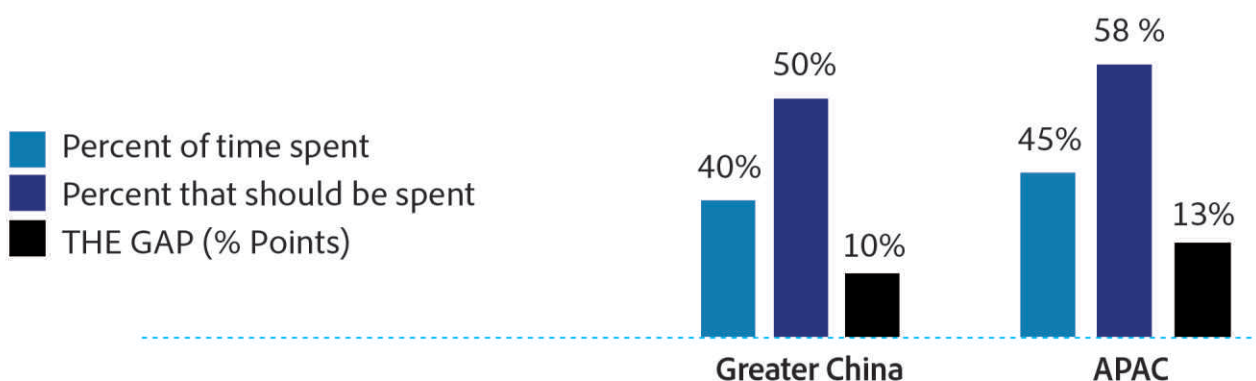
Most needed: 28% of the group cited the need for tools and training while another 19% said that improving the curriculum would go a long way in fostering creativity.

Areas in which respondents seek more room for creativity

Arts – 17%
 Humanities – 12%
 Science – 21%
 Engineering – 9%
 Maths – 4%
 All of them – 9%
 Other – 28%

Unlike with the larger group, respondents from Greater China listed specific subjects in which they sought more opportunity for creativity in the classroom.

Time spent on creativity in the classroom in the last 12 months: Actual vs Target



Current practices in creativity:

The percentage of respondents identifying select practices that are currently encouraged and used in the classroom are **mostly lower** than the APAC averages.

Current Practices	Greater China	APAC
Promoting collaborative practices and teamwork	53%	61%
Teaching classes such as art, drama, etc.	28%	36%
Involving children in higher level critical thinking skills	55%	58%
Encouraging idea generation	60%	66%
Rewarding creative ideas	43%	54%
Tolerating ambiguity and making mistakes	47%	40%
Leveraging technology	40%	40%

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

INDIA

Barriers to creativity – Top 3 factors cited

An education system too reliant on testing and assessment – **35%**

Educators ill-equipped with tools and techniques – **16%**

Misunderstanding of the importance of creativity – **12%**

Would like to do more but...: A majority of respondents (**69%**) said they were hampered by an education system that is not geared toward creativity. Another **45%** cited a lack of resources to support their efforts.

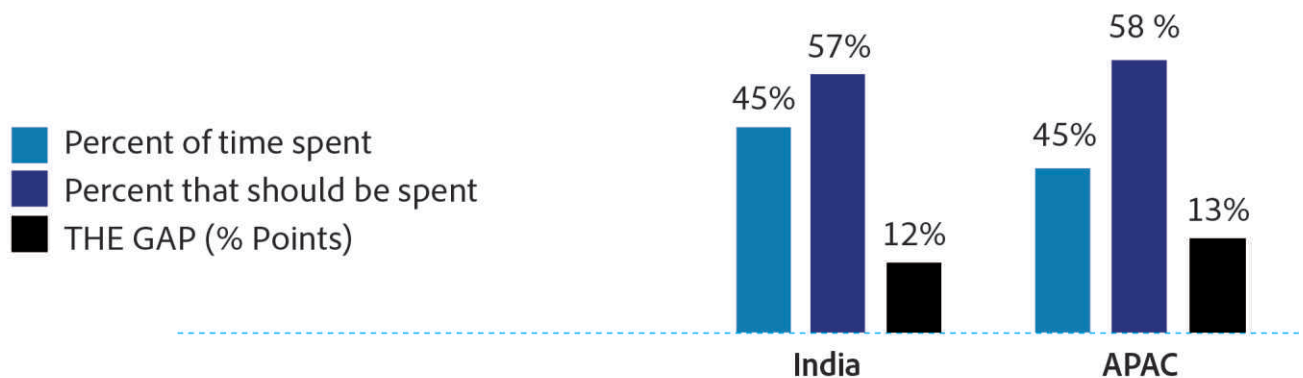
Most needed: **41%** of the group cited the need for tools and training while another **22%** said that integrating creativity would go a long way in fostering creativity.

Percent that wants more opportunity for creativity in all the subjects (not just the arts, humanities or other standalone subjects)

India: 63%
Asia-Pacific: 48%

A significantly larger number of respondents, as compared to the Asia-Pacific benchmark, said that they would like more creative freedom in all of the subjects they taught

Time spent on creativity in the classroom in the last 12 months: Actual vs Target



Current practices in creativity:

The percentages of respondents identifying specific practices currently used in the classroom were **on par** with the averages for the larger APAC group.

Current Practices	India	APAC
Promoting collaborative practices and teamwork	62%	61%
Teaching classes such as art, drama, etc.	36%	36%
Involving children in higher level critical thinking skills	56%	58%
Encouraging idea generation	67%	66%
Rewarding creative ideas	62%	54%
Tolerating ambiguity and making mistakes	37%	40%
Leveraging technology	37%	40%

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

SOUTH KOREA

Barriers to creativity – Top 3 factors cited

An education system too reliant on testing and assessment – 46%

Educators ill-equipped with tools and techniques – 12%

The current education curriculum – 12%

Would like to do more but...: More than 50% of respondents said they were constrained by a lack of resources while another 36% faulted an education system that was not geared toward creativity.

Most needed: 38% of the group cited the need for tools and training while another 27% said that integrating creativity would go a long way in fostering creativity.

Unlike with the larger group, respondents from South Korea listed specific subjects in which they sought greater creative freedom in the classroom.

Areas in which respondents seek more room for creativity

Arts – 41%

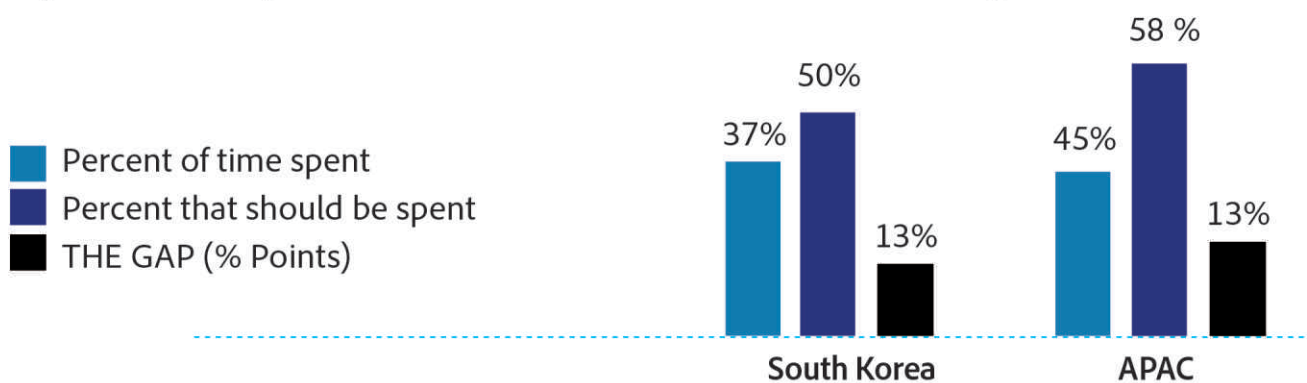
Humanities – 16%

Science – 17%

Engineering – 15%

Maths – 7%

Time spent on creativity in the classroom in the last 12 months: Actual vs Target



Current practices in creativity:

The percentage of respondents identifying select practices that are currently encouraged and used in the classroom are **significantly lower** than the APAC averages.

Current Practices	Australia	APAC
Promoting collaborative practices and teamwork	53%	61%
Teaching classes such as art, drama, etc.	25%	36%
Involving children in higher level critical thinking skills	41%	58%
Encouraging idea generation	52%	66%
Rewarding creative ideas	32%	54%
Tolerating ambiguity and making mistakes	18%	40%
Leveraging technology	17%	40%

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Barriers to creativity – Top 3 factors cited

An education system too reliant on testing and assessment – 31%

Educators ill-equipped with tools and techniques – 17%

Misunderstanding of the importance of creativity in education – 17%

Would like to do more but...: A large number of respondents (63%) said that they were constrained by a lack of resources to support more creativity in the classroom. Another significant percentage (42%) said that the current system is not geared toward creativity.

Most needed: 57% of the surveyed educators cited the need for tools and training while another 17% said that it was important to integrate creativity into the curriculum in order to get the best results.

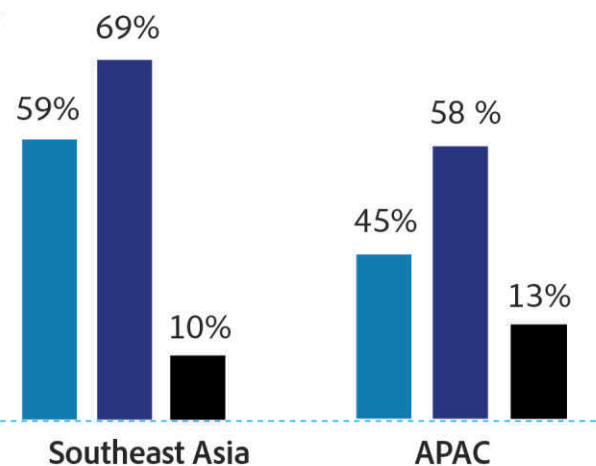
Percent that wants more opportunity for creativity in all the subjects (not just the arts, humanities or other standalone subjects)

Southeast Asia: 77%
Asia-Pacific: 48%

A significantly larger number of respondents, as compared to the Asia-Pacific benchmark, said that they would like more creative freedom in all of the subjects taught in schools.

Time spent on creativity in the classroom in the last 12 months: Actual vs Target

■ Percent of time spent
■ Percent that should be spent
■ THE GAP (% Points)



Current practices in creativity:

The percentage of respondents identifying select practices that are currently encouraged and used in the classroom are **on par with, or higher** than the APAC averages.

Current Practices	Southeast Asia	APAC
Promoting collaborative practices and teamwork	69%	61%
Teaching classes such as art, drama, etc.	36%	36%
Involving children in higher level critical thinking skills	59%	58%
Encouraging idea generation	72%	66%
Rewarding creative ideas	61%	54%
Tolerating ambiguity and making mistakes	46%	40%
Leveraging technology	58%	40%

CONCLUSION



The **State of Creativity in Education Survey** is a valuable instrument for gauging the pulse of school systems located in different geographies. It allows us to capture the views and sentiments of the individuals who man the primary and most important frontier in education – the classroom.

Through the 2013 survey administered to educators in five countries or country blocs in the Asia-Pacific region, we are able to derive a clearer picture of where creativity fits in the current scenario and what needs to change to accommodate it better. We can study ratings and response averages to identify deficiencies as well as opportunities for emulation within the region. We can track the variation in responses across the countries surveyed to see if they are explained by cultural, socio-economic, political or other factors.

In short, the survey yields a wealth of analyzable information for anyone involved or interested in the field of education – as a teacher, a consultant, a parent or a policymaker.

To paraphrase Sir Ken Robinson: “[Education] is what is supposed to take us into this future that we cannot grasp”. It is a very serious responsibility for school systems and educators around the world and the key to tackling this challenge is to periodically take a closer look at teaching methods and delivery mechanisms to see what needs to be overhauled.

A survey such as this one is an important part of that exercise. By mapping the existing landscape, it allows us to start thinking about ways to enrich it.

VOICES: ADDITIONAL INPUT FROM THE SURVEY

I do not have any issues integrating creativity; it is totally up to me to make the classes as creative as possible."

-- *Senior Secondary Teacher, Australia*

I would love to have the ability to integrate creativity more into my classroom but it creates huge friction with staff members and administration who think that you must not be doing real work if education is fun and creative."

-- *Primary School Teacher, Australia*

I would love to have the ability to integrate creativity more into my classroom but there is a lack of tangible leadership support."

-- *Senior Secondary Administrator, Singapore*

The performance-based system for teachers over-emphasizes research."

-- *Higher Education Teacher, Hong Kong*

To nurture students who can think for themselves and be confident in what they do is a key to educating our students."

-- *Senior Secondary Teacher, Australia*

There is a need for education policy which introduces creativity in teaching; also to design classroom assignment which will challenge the student to think differently."

- *Higher Education Consultant, India*

A lack of community and political understanding of the process of education means that creativity is not prioritised. Among administrators, there is a fear that creativity will be seen as counter-educative."

- *Secondary School Teacher, Australia*

Dismantle structures built around pre-determined educational content."

-- *Administrator, Higher Education, India*

Let students have the option of creating more than just one thing in an assessment task - let them have the option to go in many directions - make the criteria broader and give them marks for creativity."

- *Senior Secondary Teacher, Australia*

I am at times bogged down by administrative work , at times paucity of time and the demand of the curriculum."

-- *Head of Institution, Primary School, India*





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