**Sources of Creativity and Resilience in Children**

**Introduction**

Creativity is a difficult concept to define or describe. Some of these definitions include:

* According to Gardner, 1993, creativity is concerns liberation of people’s energy.
* It is also a phenomenon whereby a person invents or comes up with something new for example products, solutions, jokes, art works which have some kind of value. A number of researchers emphasize that it entails fluency and flexibility of originality thoughts, discernment of problems and capability to redefine and explain ideas (Guildford, 1950).
* According to Kohl (2010), creativity is focused on the procedure of coming up with original ideas by examination and findings.
* Educational writers together with researchers have expounded on the general meaning of creativity by suggesting incorporation of ideas to do with invention and people’s thoughts.

From the definitions above we see the reasons we see that creativity does not only mean coming up with big ideas, but creating solutions that are realistic to daily problems and then applying them to actual life situations. Our surroundings- our dwellings, medical services, cities, communication and transport systems - are pictured and build by realistic people with full knowledge implementing ideas that are creative. There is tendency to underestimate the importance of creativity usually at individual level but creativity should be closely be linked with broad range of daily activities and tasks.

**Resilience**

As such it has also been defined in various ways by a number of researchers who located exact factors like trusting relationships, emotional support outside the family, self-assurance, independence encouragement, calculated risk taking, hope, a sense of being loved, school achievement, believing in ethics and God, having full love for people and a child's self genetic temperament and structure which are crucial in determining whether a child will be resilient or not. This means a child's susceptibility to nervousness, tests, stress establishes child’s self-perception, interaction with others how the child responds to difficulty situations.

* The word resilience is derived from Latin roots meaning to ‘jump or leap back’. Meaning the ability of recovering from or adapting with less difficulty to disaster, adversity or change. It also means the ability to embrace disturbances, to be transformed and re-organise while retaining the same identity
* Resilience is largely understood as optimistic adaptation in situations where personal, familial or environmental difficulties are very great that we would anticipate an individual’s cognitive and useful abilities to be impaired (Rutter 1987; Garmezy 1985, 1987, 1994; Masten, 1994).
* Resilience is also defined as worldwide ability permitting persons or a community to reduce, avoid, or overcome the destructive effects of adversity, (Grotberg 1994).
* Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen (1984) in one of their studies operationally describe resilience as, expression of ability in children in spite of being exposed to traumatic moments.
* Rutter (1987) expresses resilience as undergoing "Stress in away and normally at a time that permits self-assurance and social capability to enlarge all the way through mastery and suitable responsibility”.
* In another study, Masten (1994) defines resilience as the successful adaptation despite risk and adversity of an individual. She further states that resilience refers to a pattern over time, characterized by good eventual adaptation despite developmental risk, acute stressors, or chronic adversities.
* Gordon (1994) defines resilience as the capability to flourish, mature and increase ability in the face of unfavourable circumstances. Examples of these circumstances may be genetic abnormalities, ecological barriers. Genetically (biologically), psychological, and ecological resources are essential in order to flourish, mature, and boost ability.

**Sources of Creativity**

There are different sources or alternative conceptions and models of creativity and resilience in young children. In a school setting for example, creativity can be nurtured using the appropriate inventive environment as follows:

* Ensuring continuous enrichment of the school environment;
* Providing creative programmes for developing divergent thinking; and
* Availability of teachers who think or present knowledge in new ways.

Children for example by observing and imitating type of problem-solving or creative behaviour by their model like parents, teacher, peer, television character.e.tc. Parents, teachers and all child caregivers could thus utilize Bandura’s theory in teaching creativity, resilience, or other conceptual behaviors, by providing models of the type of behavior they would like their children to exhibit*.*

**Sources Of Resilience**

***Grotberg* (1994)** divulges that a child draws from any of the three sources of resilience features described as: **I** **have**, **I** **am**, **I** **can,** as taken from the findings of the International Resilience Project which recognized 36 qualitative factors contributing to resilience. The factors are divided into 3 main groups both comprising of five elements as indicated below.

**I HAVE**

The I HAVE factors refers to are the outer resources and supports that prop up or support resilience. Before a child becomes aware of who she is (`I AM') and also what she can do (`I CAN'), external support and resources is usually required in order to develop safety and security feelings that in turn lay foundation that is core in building resilience. This support continues to be very imperative during a childhood period. These supports continue to be important throughout childhood.

Resilient child for instance with assurance says that:

I Have..........

1. Persons around me I trust and who love me, no matter what (trusting relationships). These people may be the child parents, relatives, teachers, and friends who care for and recognize the child.
2. Persons who put restrictions for me so I know when to discontinue before there is danger or problem.
3. Persons willing to demonstrate to me how to do things in a right manner the way they do them. Parents, grown ups, siblings and peers acting in ways that demonstrate to the child acceptable and desired behaviours in the family and towards outsiders become the child’s role model.
4. Persons wanting me to learn to do things on my own. These are the people in the child’s life.
5. People with a willing desire to assist me when I feel unwell, face danger or requires to learn.

**I AM**

These are the child's inner, individual strengths. They comprise of child’s beliefs, attitudes. Resilient child for instance says...

**I am:**

1. Child persons can love and like i.e. The child is aware that he/she is lovable and his/her temperament is appealing and that people like and love him or her.
2. Glad in doing pleasant things for others and demonstrate my worry- The child is loving, empathetic and unselfish towards people and conveys that love in various ways.
3. Respectful of myself and others- The child feels proud of him/herself and recognizes himself or herself as a person who is important.
4. The child is willing to carry responsibility to what he/she does. The child is independent and accountable. A child can accomplish things alone and be willing to take responsibility to actions taken.
5. Sure things will be all right- The child has trust, hope and faith. He or she believes there is hope and that there are persons and institutions that one can trust or rely on for help. The child experiences ability to have a sense of right and wrong and believes deep in the heart that the right will win always, and further more wants to contribute to the right. The child possesses faith and confidence in goodness and morality and sometimes express it as a belief in greater spiritual being of God.

**I CAN**

Refers to a child's interpersonal and social capabilities. They learn these abilities by working together with others and from their teachers. Resilient child says,

**I can......**

1. Let others know things that are frightening or bothering me- The child has the ability to speak or articulate feeling to others and opinion. He or she is able to listen to others and being aware of their feeling. The child is able to reconcile differences and at the same time understand and similarly respond act on communication results.
2. A child is able to discover ways to resolve problems he or she facing- he or she can consider scope of the problem and its nature, what the child needs to do in order to resolve and what help is needed from others if necessary.
3. Be able to take care of myself when I do sense I am doing something that is not right or dangerous- The child is able to manage impulses and feelings. The child is aware of recognizing his/ her feelings, assign emotional names, and furthermore express them both in behaviour and words alike that don’t violate rights and feelings of others or themselves. The child can also manage the impulse to hit, run away, damage property, or behave otherwise in a harmful manner.
4. Figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or to take action- The child can gauge his/her temperament and that of others.
5. Look for somebody to help when I require it – The child can look for trustworthy relationships or people such as parents, teachers, adults, or peer to request for help, share feelings and concerns.

Children may relay less or more heavily at different ages on their I HAVE, IAM and ICAN resources. While growing a child increasingly shift his or her dependence from outside support of I HAVE to his or her own skill of I CAN as he or she continually builds and strengthens personal feelings and attitudes of IAM.

Because children resilience skills differ at different ages, the caregivers and parents should also vary resilience-supporting language and behaviour to adapt to the children’s developmental stage.

**The Nature of Creativity and Resilience**

**Nature of Creativity**

Creativity is not only in-born; it can also be instilled if the right environment is provided. Research has shown that creativity is a skill that caregivers can help children develop. All children have varying levels of creativity and as caregivers it is crucial to provide an environment that fosters and develops creativity in children. It is imperative to note that children are not likewise when it comes to creativity.

A case for inborn creativity has been made by Psychologists for many years. Like in 1957 Abraham Maslow referred to primary creativeness. Maslow says creativity originated in the subconscious and probably was a source to new discoveries.

While many researchers held this view, Steven Pinker and Stanley Greenspan (1997) recommended it is possible for us to recognize invention and creativity capability at a little age. Their belief was that people genetically are disposed to creativeness.

Away from scientific evidence it is known that children display more of creativity qualities than adults. It should be noted that a child is naturally inquisitive with good imagination and fantasy capabilities. Usually small children discover, ask questions and freely willing to be judged by others.

According to Howard Gardner individual child at the age of 7 years should have developed resources of creativity that help them throughout their respective adult lives. Though this type of creativity can grow throughout life. Rich initial capital increases flow of creativity.

Vygotsky proposes that a child’s creativity is not as much as that of the adult because of limited know-how and inadequate cognitions. Children’s creativity is likely to be more subjective than the adults. A Child would tend to create for himself, while an adult create equally himself and for the world.

According to Edward De Bono young children creativity is a function of their incorruptibility. If usual approach, concept and solution is not known then one is likely to come up with a new method of discerning things.

De Bono suggests that as a child grows older, he is more affected by views of others and this in turn inhibits a child’s creativity.

**Types Of Creativity**

There are many types of creativity as listed below.

* **Linguistic creativity** – where one can be said to have a flair or gift with words such as lyricists, writers, poets etc.
* **Logical-Mathematica**l – where one is exceptionally good with logical and mathematical concepts and can usually explain complex concepts in a manner lay-men can easily understand.
* **Musical** – where one is gifted in composing music and or playing musical instruments.
* **Visual-Spatial** – here is where creativity is expressed in art – paintings, drawings, sculptures etc.
* **Bodily-Kinaestheti**c – here creativity is expressed through body movements such as dance, gymnastics, acrobatics etc.

**Nature of Resilience**

Resilience refers to basic human capacity growing in all children. Through actions, words and the environment provided it should be understood that care givers and parents support resilience in children. People promoting resilience makes institutional and even family supports available to children. The adult encourages children to become independent, responsible, sympathetic and unselfish. They also encourage the children to approach persons and challenging situations with trust, faith and hope. These adults responsibility is to show them practically how to talk with peers, successful deal with negative thoughts and provide solutions to problems.

All children have a capacity for resilience which then enables them build up social ability, crisis solving skills, independence, a feeling of reason and a critical consciousness as well.

* Social competence. These include qualities like
* Responsiveness (ability to bring out optimistic responses from others).
* Flexibility (ability to move amid different cultures).
* Empathy.
* communication skills and
* a sense of humour.
* Problem solving skills. It is the ability to plan, to seek help from others and ability to think creatively, critically and often times reflectively.
* Autonomy. It means ability to have a sense of one’s identity with ability to act independently while exerting some control over one's surroundings. Refusing to accept negative messages about oneself and distancing from dysfunction serves as a influential guard of independence.

Ability to understand these characteristics gives educators and service providers a new viewpoint from which to view the children we serve.

**Types Of Resilience**

Three kinds of resilience are described in literature (Masten et al. 1994).

* **Type One:** This type is stands for children who don’t submit to adversity, in spite of experiencing big levels of risk status. For example babies with low birth weight.
* **Type Two:** These are children who build up adaptation strategies in stressful situations. Children born to parents using drugs and alcohol fall in this type of resilience.
* **Type Three Resilience:** It comprises of children who have undergonesevere trauma, for example disasters, sudden loss of a close relative or abuse, and who have recovered and prospered.

The International Resilience Project asked children and their parents around the world what adversities they had experienced; the answers were numerous (Grotberg 1995). Among those difficulties experienced within the family, in order of frequency, were:

* Abduction fear
* Losing of parents, grandparents or a loved one as well as murder and suicide cases
* Divorce, separation, remarriage or abandonment
* Hospitalization, illness or poor health of self, parent, sibling or loved one, disabled family member(s)
* Lack of basic needs e.g. food, clothing, dwelling etc. due to poverty or various circumstances.
* Parents/ child moving to a new school or environment, forced repatriation of family
* Any form of accident causing injury to self, loved ones or to personal property e.g. fires causing personal injury
* Any form of physical, mental, sexual or socio-emotional abuse from family members, relatives, and non-relatives.
* Insecurity in the neighbourhood e.g. robberies, murder
* Calamities: war, earthquake, flood, famine and drought
* Being a refugee illegally
* Damaging of properties by natural disasters such as floods
* Political and government instability

A child who faces above situations feel lonesome and vulnerable. These feelings are not as much of devastating for children who have the skills, attitudes and resources of resilience.

**Relationship Between Creativity And Resilience**

Children who display resilience tend to be more creative and likewise creative children are more likely to develop resilience when faced with difficult circumstances (Landau, 1998). On the other hand additional research need to be done to ascertain what sort of relationship they share; whether it is a co-dependent relationship or it is mutually exclusive, a cause and effect relationship or any other description in-order to fully understand what relationship creativity and resilience share.

**Suggestions for Further Reading**

1. Benard, B., & Sharp-Light, N. (2007). Resiliency in action: Practical ideas for

overcoming risks and building strengths in youth, families, and

communities. Ojai, CA: Resiliency in Action, Inc.

1. Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative' (Sir Ken Robinson, Oxford, 2001)
2. *Creativity in Early Childhood Classroom*, NEA Early Childhood Education
3. Lindqvist, G. (2003) 'Vygotsky's Theory of Creativity', Creativity Research Journal, 15: 2, 245 — 251
4. Robinson, K. (2001). Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative. West Sussex: Capston Publishing Limited.
5. Tegano, Moran III, Sawyers (1991). Creativity in Early Childhood Classroom,NEA Early Childhood Education Series, Washington, D.C.: National Education Association of the United States, September 1991