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THE 22ND INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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The Ingenious Mind

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Artists of the renaissance became widely known because of their distinct styles and techniques that were unique to their era. Most of the tools and media were limited due to the technology of their time, but these artists managed to produce the most notable and acclaimed works of art in history. The modern-day artists have access to limitless variety of tools and media that gave birth to various forms of artistic expression. It has been centuries since the earliest form of art and regardless of the span of time and huge disparity of styles, it is creativity that acts as a common medium that paints immortalized works of art with every stroke of the brush on the canvass.

Whether it be art, music, theatre arts, writing or any profession, creativity knows no bounds. It is for those who believe that with imagination come limitless possibilities. Those who are able to wield the potential of ingenuity, open doors of learning opportunities as well as a path to self-discovery. If applied to everyday living, creativity presents an alternative avenue and is presented in its most practical form: resourcefulness. We learn how to live with whatever we have and use whatever is available to solve the most serious and the most trivial issues in life. For example, instead of using the usual bandage or gauze for a patient with a puncture wound, we could use a handkerchief or tear a part of his shirt as a temporary bandage.

If we want to boil water, but there is no tea kettle available, then why not use a frying pan? As long as we don't add oil to it and fill it up to the brim. Kidding aside, we are faced with a variety of issues and obstacles and we all have choices to make. Ingenious decisions may not be a work of art or what society accepts as "normal", but if thinking out-of-the-box to effectively address a predicament gets the job done, then why not? Being creative can sometimes raise eyebrows, but it's because they don't have a full understanding of the process and therefore fail to realize the potential of inventiveness in everyday living.

The brush is an indispensable tool for painters, the media that they use (oils, acrylics, pastels, mixed-media, etc) and their unique styles only takes form when applied on canvass. Computers are vital for graphic artists, cameras for photographers, exercise equipment for trainers, instruments for musicians and knowledge, wisdom and emotional intelligence for teachers. Each with his/her own media and creativity that are common elements to concretize every individual's unique styles on their chosen canvass of professions and lives. Life is a canvass, paint it creatively well.

Questions to discussion:

1. What is creativity and it's significance in your life?
2. Cite some specific examples of how creativity had been useful in your life. Explain each experience in detail.
3. What are the synonyms of "creativity" in the essay? Find them all and use them in your own sentence.
4. If you have forgotten to buy some groceries, but you have leftovers in the fridge, what would you do?
5. What do you think is the meaning of "Life is a canvass, paint it creatively well." Please explain thoroughly.



CREATIVITY IN THE PRACTICE OF PROFESSION

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Creativity is considered a unique gift possessed by such people as artists, writers, directors, advertising people, teachers, even businessmen. Unlike doctors, lawyers and accountants who have to live their professional lives ensconced in the precise world of Science, Math and beyond-reasonable-doubt forms of reasoning, those who deal with life and their profession using much creativity use less exact concepts in their works. Others might argue that for art to be truly “artistic”, there has to be exact balance in color, shapes, and other basic components. But remember that the most lauded pieces have been in the abstract forms, for they incite the mind to think of symmetry where there seems to be none, thought principles where they seem to be non-existent.

Of course, lawyers need to have their own brand of creativity, right? They need to defend their clients no matter what, even when the argument seems to be unfeasible at best. Although they always ask that their clients stick to the truth as closely as possible, this is not always the case. Otherwise, they would lose cases easily and without a fight. So they need to practice just a little “creativity” in their arguments. Can you just imagine how unscrupulous lawyers deal with the practice? This is not to condemn all lawyers and categorize them as cheats and liars---it forms part of their job specifications. As Patrick Murray once said, “A lawyer will do anything to win a case; sometimes he will even tell the truth.”

Even doctors sometimes have to be creative enough to soften the impact of what they have to reveal to their patients. It wouldn't be good practice to tell the patient that he's about to die in three days, it won't be kind. In the US, it is considered medically unethical to reveal the specifics about one's medical condition to the patient's relatives, for instance, to the patient's spouse. Formal permission has to be obtained from the patient himself. But that's not the case in our country, where everything is shared, even the specific medical conditions of a certain patient. I wouldn't say that the American way is infinitely better, but come to think of it, it could be, in more ways than one. It would allow the patient to decide on his own how to go about his specific condition.

Some would undoubtedly argue that two or more heads are better than one, so having someone close to tackle whatever condition you have can prove more advisable. But there's always the option to provide disclosure when the patient chooses, so there's a way to go around that. Unlike when the patient's loved ones know from the onset about the patient's condition, the burden would be doubled, tripled, quadrupled, depending on how many people know. It is therefore upon the practitioner to practice a little practical creativity when the need arises.

In closing, let us remember that we all have to deal with a little creativity one way or the other. That's how the world runs, creatively.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why does an artist have to be creative?
2. Do you agree with the writer's opinion about lawyers and doctors?
3. Who is the most creative person you know? Talk about this person in class.
4. Why do you think teachers need to be creative in the practice of their profession?
5. Do you think you are a creative person? Why or why not?



CREATIVITY IN THE PRACTICE OF PROFESSION-PART 2

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Oftentimes, creative writing can prove to be really tough. It involves the use of words in order to stimulate imagery. Unfortunately, the challenge for creative writers is to create images that match their own, or closely correspond to what they have in mind. The work of a creative writer might prove unfulfilling when he fails to incite the exact same emotions or images in his reader's mind. One might write all he wants when he wants and say he has created something. But will what he has created sit well with his intended readers? Will it open the reader's mind to what the writer actually means, in the first place?

The arts are a little less challenging, because they are often geared towards different kinds of people with diverse interpretations. Have you ever wondered how some people sometimes virtually cry in front of an art piece? This is because they see something in that art piece which touches them in a way not quite parallel to other people's interpretation. Art is an independent form in that it seeks to find its soul in other people's concept of true art. What may seem an insignificant mishmash of shapes, lines, and colors to some may represent something deeper for others. The artist's underlying concept has to be discovered on one's own.

Teachers need to be creative; otherwise they would end up presenting a pedagogic and pedantic image to their students. Teachers need to recognize the uniqueness of each and every student in their class, even when the students are of the same age, ethnicity or interests. There will always be something different in a student that sets him apart from the rest. It is therefore upon the teacher to accept that very diversity and work creatively towards customizing his lessons to match the student's needs and purpose.

Businessmen require much creativity in the practice of their professions. The business world is highly competitive, so formulas for success do not stay the same forever. Success is not an ironclad destiny for all who venture into the world of business, and only those with the guts, good sense, and a healthy dose of creativity to innovate and blaze trails actually find themselves on the way to success. Follow the examples of highly creative people like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and a host of other people who have managed to create a niche of their own because of being visionaries with a great sense of creativity.

In sum, creativity might prove a little difficult to actually have as a personal trait, and only those with a wider vision of the horizon and whatever lies ahead can get into practicing a profession that requires creativity. It is a gift, if you will, and only a few people are actually allowed to have it, share it, and touch the lives of others with it.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Who is your favorite writer? Why is he/she your favorite?
2. Who is your favorite teacher? Why is he/she your favorite?
3. Do you agree that teachers need to be creative? Why or why not?
4. Why do business people need to have creativity?
5. What happens when artists lose their creativity? How can an artist maintain/regain creativity?



PARENTAL CREATIVITY

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As a parent, it is essential to remember, especially in a family with two or more children, that love is not a pie you can give to each child in pieces. Parental love has to be equally divided and yet completely whole. It takes a lot of patience and practice, a lot of trial and error, to be able to see all your kids as unique and deserving of their own space in the family. It is oftentimes normal to have favorites, but the trick is not to show your kids openly that you play favorites.

Children are more intelligent today than we give them credit for. They have been exposed to a more diverse environment which we ourselves might not have been exposed to at all during our own time. Children today learn to question, think independently, and pursue things in a more independent manner.

It is therefore upon the creative parent to roll with the tides of change, to learn the ropes of the modern world in an almost parallel manner as his children do. We can no longer say that science and technology are too much for us to handle, for this will make us lose our connection to our children.

Take for instance, the world of social networking sites. Wouldn't it be funny if our children's friends and contacts actually know more than we do about our own kids? We need to be attuned to such technological concepts, because our kids build their bridges and their reputations using those sites. We should become our children's friends, maybe not get too addicted to the sites entirely, but at least keep abreast with what our children think about and feel during the course of their own lives.

Creative parents also find ways to connect with their kids in home situations. Why not use the time washing your family car as a time for bonding? Or cooking time as a way to ask your kids about school? Use family chore times creatively to relate with your kids, to find out what their concerns are, to connect with them, one way or another. That would be a lot better than arguing at the family table. Oh, but I do know some people who can argue creatively at the dinner table, and that is a technique I have yet to master, as it is.

Parenthood signals a different chapter in our lives. But it doesn't have to signal the end of creativity. In fact, becoming a parent can help make an individual attain creativity in more ways imaginable. We do not just become parents because we have the power to procreate; we become true parents when we become proactively creative in the performance of our parental duties.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why do parents need to be creative?
2. Talk about how your own parents practice creativity in your family.
3. In your opinion, is it difficult for a parent to connect with his/her child? Why or why not?
4. Do you think you can be a creative parent? Why or why not?
5. Can creativity be learned by a child from his own parents? How?



SINGING DOLL

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The first five years of a child's life are the most crucial years for two main reasons; the child's personality and his or her sub consciousness. What is being taught or taken in, whether voluntarily or not, will be stored in the child's cerebrum and that storage would shape up the child's personality during the growing years. A wise guardian or parent would try to invest in this child all what would be positive to motor the creative skills in him or her.

My four year old daughter, Jana, sings anything, and in some cases, I am not sure if she is singing a known song or nursery rhyme or just jamming in words to impress the listeners. However, I focus on her singing skills, acknowledging the fact that she loves to be heard and that she can pitch high and low as if intensifying the musical tones like a professional singer. So, for the time being, I am giving her a lot of attention by providing her with simple musical instruments such as a guitar, a piano and drums and encouraging her to sing out loud without commenting or criticizing her because she is too young to understand the cons and pros of singing.

With time, she has grown with more confidence such as singing in the school bus, in the playground and in front of some grown ups. Some people are impressed from her way of singing and from her confidence. She is now happy with herself and the new habit of singing she has adopted. Maybe in the near future she will be able to participate in the school's chorus or any other local competitions. As a matter of fact, I was quite surprised when she stood up behind a microphone in a beach party where we were enjoying a karaoke night and started singing her favorite nursery rhyme 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'. This incident shook me passionately and made me cry.

Put fewer rules, give more spaces and figure what makes one creative. You may be a teacher, a parent, a friend or a mate and bring that person's creativity into light. Don't you think motivating a naturally born singer, writer, painter or artist would elevate your touches as you lead that person to the stage of performance? So, sharpen your creative skills to glitter the lives of many others as well as yours.

Questions for discussion:

1. Define the word 'creative' from your perspective and/or experience.
2. Why the early years of a person are are considered important?
3. What do you think may happen to Jana in the future if she carries on singing?
4. Which part of the brain is responsible for the thinking skills?
5. Look deeper into yourself and discover your own creativity, what can you tell about a skill that you excel in?



CREATIVITY – A PHENOMENON

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Creativity, as the word itself implies, is the act of making something new. Although intuitively it is a simple phenomenon that can exist in our mind and is prevalent in our social life and the society, the... word has its diversified and various meanings. As a matter of fact, the term itself is quite complex and is conceived in many ways and thoughts that our mind can ever imagine. It deals with the uniqueness of one's mind to produce a unique and genuine idea or concept that exudes from a person in an extraordinary manner. One can compare it to science as phenomena, but it has actually no definite definition and it does not even exist in a single perspective. Creativity can not be measured nor contained in the human mind, per se, but in more ways than one. Thus, there is neither standard technique that one can compare nor measure in terms of its complexity. This is the sole reason why it can be considered a phenomenon. It is spectacular, marvellous, wonderful and an exceptional attribute that a human being can hold and imagine himself to bring out. Creativity emanates that indescribable experience in a person's life that makes an individual unique and distinct in his own right.

In our daily dealings with everything that exist in this world, an individual may deal with varied ideas or concepts that are unintentionally displayed the moment we step out of our bed. Believe it or not, a person's mind is filled with a lot of thoughts that he has not conceived, but only to find out that he would not last a day without his mind producing and displaying an action, attitude, idea, and concept or come what may. The human mind is exceptional, that is why there are famous persons who excel in Arts and Sciences, Literature, Music and in all aspects of the entertainment world. Their creative achievements can bring us to surmise that their creative insights bring about or are often followed by feelings of elation. The best example of which is Albert Einstein who created the general theory of relativity "the happiest thoughts of my life." Yes, a person can and may have both a positive and negative affect in one's daily life. Researches were conducted and they have found out that, the more positive a person's affect is, the higher is their creativity in a work setting.

It only follows that we as individuals have our own creative thoughts in one way or another, showing that distinct quality of excellence in everything that we do. There is nobody out there who wants to be a mediocre. As the saying goes, "There are no two persons alike," because it has been a fact that, each individual proves to be a unique person. There is only one YOU and you have only one mind that encompasses all the abilities that other people has. Each to its own, anyone can stand out in his own right, in his special way that our Creator has created us to be. Unlike any phenomena, CREATIVITY is a one of a kind experience that an individual's mind can grasp, envision, exhibit and manifest in an outright demonstration of the complex ideas that one can conceive and perceive. So, SQUEEZE OUT that best in you, for your CREATIVITY to materialize.

Questions for discussion:

- 1.How creative can a person be in terms of individuality?
- 2.In your entire life, have you experienced to put our that "creativity" in you? In what particular stage and time of your life? Please elaborate on your answer.
- 3.How would you describe or define creativity based on your experiences in life?
- 4.Have you been creative lately that you begin to discover the real "YOU"? Justify your answer.
- 5.How does creativity apply in your life?



CREATIVITY – A PRELUDE FOR INNOVATION

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Hundreds of years ago, technology was never the same the way we have it at the moment. With the space age, the computer era and modern technology present around the world, one can not disclose the fact that... everything changes. These things also brought a lot of improvement and modernization in all aspects in the history of humanity. During those times, it is impossible and illogical for us to think of people driving in cars and seventy years ago, we very well know that space travel was just a fiction created by our illusory mind. Man's mind is not docile, for its novelty has been proven after so many years (with the rate that our mind is going) of how inventive, fresh and unique our mind is. Producing these creative ideas brought about modernization and the like, thus leading to innovation. The process of generating and applying these creative ideas in a specific context is what innovation means. This is the reason why the creativity of an individual serves as the starting point and can therefore be referred to as a prelude for innovation. Yes, creative thinking is man's ability to be able to utilize his skills in problem solving which lead to innovative solutions, and this allows our society to make advancements. (which were thought impossible to happen before.)

The pool of ideas that swirl our thoughts and eventually make our mind come up with fresh, unique and novel ideas are the things that bring about change and progress in our society. As complex as the word creativity implies, man's creative thinking paved the way and spawned our talents and skills that set off innovation in the process. It is at times our subconscious mind that we have to crack and challenge, for us to pick the best course of action that there is to find. Every individual needs a boost to his own creative power and with the right perspective and positive mindset; we can achieve it and increase our ability to improve our way of living and experience growth. With the help of proper motivation and having that enthusiasm, you can let loose your ideas at many angles. Try to broaden your horizon with ideas from the past, present and the future to come, and this means trying something new to stimulate your imagination, giving you that great confidence builder effect.

Venture into the world of creativity and make that big leap to produce innovations in your life. Be brave enough to explore your creativity, to bring out the best in you. Take that chance to make your efforts worthwhile and expect failures to come your way; after all it is healthy and wise to experience them so as not to shun your creative efforts. Remember the saying, "Experience is the best teacher." Failure can provide us with the opportunity to learn, grow and may even lead and expose us to new opportunities and ideas! Many of this world's "failure" led to incredible inventions. Remember Thomas Edison? It took him 50,000 attempts to create that alkaline battery whose benefits we now reap and this is what we use today! Slacken your imagination and experience the ingenuity of having that creative thinking which encompasses the innovations in our life.

Questions for discussion:

1. In what way can an individual culture his creative thinking?
2. How could you bring out that creativity within yourself?
3. Define creativity in your own perspective.
4. Is creativity an innate character of a person? Why is it or why is it not so?
5. Do you believe that failure can trigger the creativity in a person? Explain your answer.



UNRAVEL YOUR CREATIVITY

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During my younger days I have succumbed to the thought that I want to explore new things that my eyes can set on. This means trying anything under the sun for me to discover a lot of things on my own accord.... In doing such, it gives me that feeling of certainty that there is more to it than meets the eye of a person. Voila! It unleashed that part of me where my curiosity and enthusiasm were triggered and unraveled my creativeness. It proved to be not only a speculation but a reality. I ventured to the world of my imagination, making me try out a lot of things like playing soccer, tennis, being an avid reader, choreograph dance steps, creating my own crossword puzzle, tried to be a stamp collector, tried to be a sports car fanatic (to the point of being able to identify the model or brand of any car that my eyes can lay on), and so on. I tried everything until I discovered how to scribble which enabled me to express my true feelings and thoughts by putting them into words. Later on, I become fond of reading and writing about anything under the sun and these cultivated my imagination. It was as if I am confronted with the real things that I am able to read and write about because I picture myself as a part of it. I know that somehow this happens to all of us, for our subconscious mind elicits a vision or an insight, creating a true picture of our thoughts.

I have come to believe that every individual has his own creativity that is just lying there somewhere waiting to be tapped and all you've got to do is to be inspired. Along the way, one meets difficulties, tribulations and even failure, but all of these were meant to be so as to be geared towards something that we did not even know we can do. Many of us grow up with a narrow view of the meaning of creativity. We were taught or made to believe that you are creative if you are good at writing stories or if one excels in drawing or painting in an art class. As for me, the true meaning of creativity is better defined as a way of thinking or the way a person perceives the world and its possibilities. It can not only be seen in entrepreneurs and inventors who has always had an innovative method or action, but creativity is a skill or talent in a person that is dormant waiting to be explored. Now is the right time to unlock and unravel your creativity.

The choice is yours to make, extricate the things that block your mind for it to create new ideas and concepts. Start having faith in yourself, expand your horizons and delve into something new to stimulate your imagination. Saturate your senses by trying new scents, food, fabric colours or maybe listening to music you wouldn't normally listen to. In so doing, you are exposing yourself to new sensations. Take the chance to brave the unknown and when someone acknowledges something creative or new things that you have done, recognize your achievement. Do not curtail any attempt or progress that you make to unlock your creativity. Go ahead and take that great leap, hold your head up, throw your arms out and celebrate it! As Lauren Bacall puts it, "Imagination is the highest kite one can fly". Yes, now is the time to soar high, unlock and unravel your creativity!

Questions for discussion:

- 1.How would you tap that creativity in you?
- 2.Have you experienced to be creative at any point and time of your life?
- 3.What is the true meaning of creativity for you?
- 4.Do you believe that being creative is practicing the talent or skill that is hidden in you? Why or why not?
- 5.Do you find means and ways to discover your creativeness? How?