

**Response to “The Creativity Crisis” by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman published in *Newsweek*, July 10, 2010.**

Newsweek recently published an article suggesting the creativity of American school children may be on the decline. The article cites results from the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) to measure the creativity of students. Although TTCT is very popular in some parts of the world, critics point out that it is an out-of-context test, like IQ tests and is not situated in the context of actual activity. Regardless of whether or not the numbers are in fact declining, the article highlights the need to ensure creativity is encouraged throughout a child's educational experience. This is deeply embedded in on-going work at the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

At CCSSO we recognize that creativity is vital to an effective educational process and further, creative thinking is critically important to the future of our country. In order to foster creativity in schools, educators must have practical means of appreciating, understanding and assessing creativity with their students. We have been working on a variety of programs seeking to encourage, advance and better measure creativity in schools:

- Partnership for Next Generation Learning (PNxGL)

Creativity needs to be encouraged and nourished inside and outside of the classroom, throughout of the public education system. If our children are to succeed in a world that is increasingly diverse, globalized, and technology-rich, they require experiences and environments for learning that are radically different from those the current system was designed to deliver. The goal of the PNxGL is to create a personalized system of education that engages and motivates each student—regardless of his or her circumstance—to be prepared for life, meaningful work, and citizenship.

- EdSteps

Student creativity cannot be assessed without context. EdSteps is an innovative assessment program in which actual student work samples are used to measure a student's creativity. As part of the EdSteps initiative, CCSSO has put together a group of leaders in education to develop an instrument that measures originality and impact of creativity



within and across all disciplines. The group's definition of creativity is derived from looking at the work of top scholars in the area of creativity and discussions with leading educators with diverse backgrounds across a broad spectrum of disciplines. Creativity has been defined by the group, as the valued uses and outcomes of originality driven by imagination, invention, and curiosity. EdSteps will begin collecting work samples from students of all ages across the globe that meet this definition through its website, [www.edsteps.org](http://www.edsteps.org) in October 2010.

CCSSO and our members, the state chiefs of education, are rising to the challenge of supporting creativity in American schools—but the risk of stagnation is there. CCSSO is collaborating with states to collectively transform public education to encourage creativity by redesigning the education system, advance creativity to the highest possible international standards, and measure creativity in a way that is situated in a context of actual activity.

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