

## Section 7.0

### CREATIVE EXPRESSION

#### Igniting that spark within each individual

**Halloween changed Noah's life.** That, and an opportunity to find and follow his passion. Struggling with autism and a complicated medical history, language came slowly to Noah. His parents were told he would not likely advance beyond fourth grade level.

When he was five, Noah discovered Halloween and costumes. For the first time, something sparked his interest. He began arranging costumes in sets across floors and furniture. His parents, working in the movie business, watched with great fascination. They introduced Noah to puppetry, then ventriloquism. He began to draw, and shortly after, discovered animation.

Noah's parents enrolled him in a media program for neurotypical kids, and instantly he became one of their best animators. He started producing animated films in middle school, which he entered into and won international competitions.

Now 18, and in high school, it is unclear whether Noah will get his diploma. His career path, however, is quite certain. Noah plans to be an animator.

*(Robinson, 2009)*

#### 7.01 Creative Expression as a Vital Programmatic Element

The pursuit of creative expression is synonymous with the pursuit of joy and the celebration of diversity. But for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities, it is far more than that. An individual's creativity can pave the path toward a life with meaning and purpose. It can lay the groundwork for lifelong learning, hobbies, and for fulfilling work experiences. It can make the difference between connection and isolation. For this reason, creative expression is an essential element of every module and a central characteristic of this transition curriculum.

**When we talk about “creative expression” here, we are talking about a:**

- Form of communication, an avenue of self-expression
- Pathway to social participation
- Means to develop relationships with others
- Representation of one's emotional experience

- Way to uncover new interests, passions, and hobbies
- Guide to short- and long-term educational planning
- A rich source for awakening, developing, and pursuing meaningful work and career opportunities

Whether expressed through movement, drama, visual arts, music, cooking, or technology, creativity is a way for individuals to connect to one another. It is a way for each individual to find his or her own voice despite personal barriers, language difficulties, or social challenges.

An operating theory of this Transition Curriculum is that when an individual is able to find his voice and express and own his interests, he also unlocks the drive to learn, enabling significant change in his life and the prospects for his future. Like Noah, in the story above, and Christopher, who you will hear about below, even young adults with significant challenges can go on to study, work and live a life full of purpose and meaning.

## 7.02 How to implement programmatically

### Program-wide

It takes a team approach to ensure creative expression is woven continuously into each student's program experience. This can be accomplished with group activities, outings, evening and weekend events, course offerings, guest visits, community collaborations, projects with fellow students, and celebrations of holidays and significant events. Whenever possible, students should be part of the creative planning process. Topics might include choosing a theme for a party, decorating a student lounge, designing fair rules of engagement while playing games, etc.

Working 1:1 or in small groups can help to awaken and expand creative expression for each student. Some students may have well-developed creative skills, personal interests, and preferences, while others have few or none. Those with strong creative interests will need continued guidance to deepen and possibly expand their personal interests and preferences. Students with limited creative experience or direction will need well-supported approaches that begin with exploration and discovery. Facilitated brainstorming can ignite creative ideas and provide a forum for exploring how to share them with others.

**! Individual differences should be embraced by all staff members no matter the approach a student may take for creative work.**

**Creative expression can be woven into the fabric of a program by:**

- Fostering a culture that values and celebrates individual forms of creative expression
- Supporting a culture that celebrates the excitement, joy, and collaboration that arises from creative endeavors
- Tapping into the creative forces of each individual student, following their lead on an interest or passion, or exposing students to new areas of creative interest
- Staff modeling creative ways to approach ideas, activities, and experiences
- Designing ways to expand and stretch each student's creative capacity in a wide variety of contexts
- Identifying ways to apply a student's creativity in educational planning and career exploration

**Students should have daily opportunities to practice and stretch their creativity in their expressions, interactions, thoughts, creations, and actions.**

For some students, it may take time and trial and error to identify creative avenues for them to pursue. Students who are already pursuing creative activities or have expressed creative interests will be able to take a more active role in the exploration and discovery process. For students at all levels of creative capability, continuing goal setting, planning, and reflection improves the outcome.

**It is important for staff to keep in mind that:**

- The rate and extent to which a student progresses is highly individual
- There is no "right" or "wrong" way to be creative
- For some individuals, being creative elicits self-doubt, frustration, low confidence, and anxiety. Challenging emotions can affect the creative process, and should be monitored and addressed as they arise.
- Creativity feeds off momentum. Intermittent or inconsistent work on creative projects may interfere with the process.
- Environment and timing can affect one's creative flow. Work with individuals to identify optimal times in the day and best places to work.

## Program-Wide Scheduling and Individualized Programs

Once an individual identifies creative avenues to pursue, the team can evaluate ways to incorporate these activities into the student's schedule through group explorations, field trips, and individualized or small group instruction. For example, one student may have a photography class in his schedule, another might have a cooking class, and another may intern at a local theater to learn about set design and scenery.

### From isolation to productivity...

**Christopher spent most of his childhood and adolescence hiding** under the blankets of his bed and under the hood of his sweatshirt. He was non-verbal and over-sensitive to all sorts of environmental stimuli, and unable to attend school or public events. His family struggled to find ways to make his life more comfortable and meaningful. "Find out what he cares about," one of his providers suggested.

Paying close attention, his mom noticed Christopher seemed to watch her when she was working in the kitchen preparing meals, and encouraged him to help. At first, he could not even measure ingredients. But he learned to stir, do other small tasks, and soon he became a huge help in the kitchen.

One day, his mother noticed he was looking at a recipe in her cookbook. Using supported typing, she and his team discovered he had learned to read on his own. With time and help, he was able to communicate using the keyboard, first just a word or two, then more. Through this technology, Christopher communicated his hopes and dreams about the future.

Today, Christopher is an entrepreneur, preparing and delivering gourmet lunches to local businesses. The business bears his name, Christopher's Cuisine (<http://christopherscuisine.com>). He designs menu selections, writes shopping lists, buys the food, and delivers the meals. He has assistants who help him with things he cannot do, like using knives or talking on the phone. Christopher is very much a part of the community and his deliveries bring far more than just food to his customers.

*Robinson, 2009*

### The Advisor's Role

As described in section 5.0 Teaching Approaches, Methods, Processes, Assessments, and Tools, students entering into the transition program are assigned an advisor to provide ongoing individualized mentoring and support. The advisor plays a critical role in student creative expression activities.

### Primary duties of the advisor are to

- Identify areas of interests and strengths based on the student's SIP, preferences, and current functional levels
- Brainstorm with advisee for creative project ideas
- Design strategies, accommodations, and modifications needed to support a particular creative endeavor
- Coordinate with instructors on executive function support for ongoing creative projects
- Monitor progress and assist with reflection and feedback sessions
- Help to obtain resources for a given project or endeavor
- Ensure that creative endeavors and approaches are woven consistently into student daily program experiences
- Assess ways the individual's creative interests could inspire or guide employment options, community involvement, continuing education, and career development opportunities

### Staff Roles

Staff play a vital role in a student's creative expression experiences. Specifically, they can

- Look for ways to capitalize on opportunities and avenues for creativity within the program
- Act as mentors and instructors for skills they have that interest students (*Examples: African drumming, painting, photography, video editing*)
- Coordinate with advisors to report concerns, share ideas to pursue, make suggestions for goal setting, coordinate resources, and provide feedback
- Use outside resources and connections to help students increase community involvement
- Participate in creative endeavors and projects as collaborators, mediators, facilitators, or mentors
- Generate and develop ideas about individual, program-wide, and community-based creative projects

### Community Contribution

Creative expression provides a means for students to form lasting relationships within their communities through shared interests and experiences. Students engaged in collaborative community-based creative experiences, relationships, and projects can

- Deepen their capacity for forming and maintaining connections and relationships with others
- Create valuable resources, contacts, mentors, advocates, and friends in their communities
- Open avenues for increased social interactions through attendance and participation in community-wide events
- Foster potential internships, volunteer positions, apprenticeships, jobs, and lifelong hobbies
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- Increase student comfort levels and confidence being out in the community and interacting with others

### Examples of creativity-based community collaboration

- Guest speakers, performances, demonstrations
- Program classes taught by local artists and artisans
- Site visits and tours of theaters, dance studios, art galleries, and craft manufacturers
- Shadowing an artist for a day
- Local collaborative exhibits, plays, and performances
- Internships, apprenticeships, volunteer experiences, jobs with local artists and performers
- Creative community projects (painting murals, beautifying or landscaping a local park, art installations in public places, public performances, community gardening)

### Student Life and School Culture

Creative expression is also a *process* that can enliven our imaginations and inspire us to learn. Staff members are encouraged to *value* creative approaches to problem solving, collaboration, brainstorming, conflict resolution, and planning.

### Desired Outcomes

Creative expression in collaborative work can improve

- Buy-in or ownership
- Personal accountability in group projects
- Executive function
- Pride, collaboration, and accomplishment
- Group problem-solving, feedback from peers, and identity-building
- Practice with emotion regulation in 1:1 and group contexts

### 7.03 Structuring an Approach to Small Group and Individual Creative Expression

This section provides general guidance on how to use group and individualized approaches to ignite and expand student creative expression. The approaches listed can be tailored to fit the needs of an individual. Group approaches capitalize on dynamic interactions emerging among peers.

#### Small group work achieves multiple goals simultaneously

- Strengthens social thinking – particularly in terms of peer interaction, communication, negotiation, and collaboration
- Expands self-awareness – identifying affinities and interests that can be used in other areas of the individual’s program and life; understanding strengths and challenges
- Provides practice with executive functions
- Builds independence
- Activates higher order thinking skills through dialogue, research, debate, and discussion
- Strengthens and deepens relationships through shared interests
- Strengthens capacity for meaningful self-reflection
- Identifies potential careers, hobbies, and interests that can become lifelong pursuits
- Increases exposure to a healthy process of decision-making through experience
- Identifies potentially valuable small group or program-wide projects

#### Group Approaches

Groups of 3-4 students with complementary developmental profiles can be configured successfully into small working groups for creative expression. Ideally, group members will have a variety of preferences, goals, hobbies, and interests. Small group work also provides a great springboard for

- Comparing and contrasting respective preferences, goals, and hobbies so all group members are exposed to potential new interests
- Designing classes based on common interests (*Example: three participants decide to learn how to draw anime*)
- Inspiring ideas and activities to explore together as a group
- Selecting goals, making plans, taking exploratory trips, and identifying potential guest speakers

#### Group Design

Once a group is established, we suggest laying the groundwork and moving forward by the steps below.

### Laying the groundwork

1. Establish fundamental structure
  - Agree upon group and social ground rules
  - Rules should include ways to respect and respond supportively to others' creative ideas/interests
2. Create safe atmosphere in which to be creative
  - Use formal and informal group-building exercises to build rapport and trust among students. Encourage sharing of thoughts and feelings, collaborative creative activities, and variety of verbal and non-verbal group bonding activities.
3. Establish basic processes group will use and agree upon
  - Group routines (opening/closing)
  - Social behaviors and goals that support collaborative and individual creative expression
4. Establish common nomenclature
  - Introduce key terms used in work including *creativity, brainstorming, creative process, trial and error, creative risk taking*. Ensure everyone has shared working definitions and good basic understanding of elements required for creativity.
5. Finding inspiration and focus
  - Discuss, define, and generate examples of creative expression
  - Use samples and visuals (written and pictorial) to note all group members' ideas

### Moving forward

1. Strengthen collaboration
  - Foster connections among group members through social relationships
  - Use idea demonstrations, show and tell, video clips, activities, etc.
2. Generate and explore creative ideas
  - Gather information about project topics
  - Use supported research on ideas generated
  - Search online, ask a professional, or use other reference materials
3. Implement creative tools and approaches – use appendices D, E, and F to
  - Generate ideas about possible creative expression activities
  - Identify discussion topics (*Example: introducing Multiple Intelligence Theory and applying it in their own lives*)

### Individual Approaches

Some individuals are shy, anxious, or self-critical about taking creative risks. They may benefit from individualized support initially. Working creatively 1:1 fosters confidence, reduces anxiety, and encourages creative risk-taking. Some students are more creative facing fewer distractions. Others struggle to work

collaboratively in creative endeavors. Still other individuals need specialized accommodations and strategies that are easier to implement 1:1.

Individual approaches to exploring creative expression are advised when

- Student has significant emotional or sensory regulation or sensitivity issues and needs a quiet environment more easily modulated by staff
- Anxiety, attentional difficulty, and perseverative thoughts interfere with cognitive processing and the individual needs 1:1 coaching to manage anxiety and stay on topic
- Student feels it is a personal process and requests doing some or all the work 1:1
- Student interests and pursuits are a mismatch for the group either in complexity or by topic
- Student has already begun a project and needs 1:1 time with staff to execute it

### 7.04 Tracking Progress in Creative Development

Staff can track the progress of each participant's creative work in a variety of ways, including:

#### Staff Meetings

Group leaders report regularly on group process and member progress so staff can

- Be informed and have the option to contribute or participate
- Assess needs for additional or different strategies or accommodations
- Identify progress towards long-term goals
- Identify others (staff and community members) who can provide assistance or support students' creative pursuits

#### Advisor

- Keeps notes on discussions with advisees regarding creativity
- Designs a creative way – in collaboration with students – to track progress visually (chart, portfolio, etc.). Collaboratively reviews and updates progress chart.
- Advisor Guide Sheets for Student Creativity Development (see Appendix G in the Appendices) may be helpful in discussions with advisees. Data collected should be added to the student SIPs for future use.
- Coordinates with career development staff on creative activities that could potentially develop into a career path or job

## 7.05 Staff Resources for Developing Creative Expression Activities

The following resources are selected to help staff in developing creative expression discussion topics and activities for small group and individuals. The language, complexity, rate, and prioritization of what content to include will depend on the cognitive and developmental levels of the individuals.

As much as possible:

- Draw from each student’s personal experiences by using stories, examples, metaphors, analogies, or comparisons
- Anchor all concepts with a student’s personal experience or self-reflection

### Multiple Intelligence and Types of Creativity

- Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory  
Lane, Carla. (undated). The Distance Learning Technology Resource Guide. Retrieved from <http://www.tecweb.org/styles/gardner.html> Nov 2013
- Links to information on classroom strategies, real life examples, and lesson plans for teaching the concept of Multiple Intelligences:  
Hanna, Nydia R. (undated). Multiple Abilities/Intelligences. Retrieved from <http://www2.gsu.edu/~mstnrhx/457/mi.htm> Nov 2013  
PBS. (undated). Educational Resources, Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory. Retrieved from [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/ed\\_mi\\_overview.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/ed_mi_overview.html) Nov 2013  
Thirteen.org. (undated). Tapping into Multiple Intelligences. Retrieved from <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/> Nov 2013
- Explore Dr. Robyn McMaster’s work on the brain and creativity and her 8 Types of Creativity (builds off of Gardner’s work)  
McMaster, Robyn. (2011). The 8 Types of Creative Intelligence. Retrieved from <http://lateralaction.com/articles/multiple-intelligences/> Nov 2013
- Explore Robert Epstein’s “4 Core Competencies of Creative Expression”
  - capturing
  - surrounding
  - challenging
  - broadening
 Epstein, Robert. (undated). Developing your creative competencies. Retrieved from <http://www.booki.cc/principles-of-creativity-in-the-workplace/develop-creativity/> Nov 2013
- Free Spirit Publishing. (2009). Story Starters In a Jar. Free Spirit Publishing.

## Creativity and the Brain

- The Brain and Creativity Institute  
USC Dornsife College. (undated). Brain and Creativity Institute. <http://dornsife.usc.edu/bci/>
- Epstein Creativity Competencies Inventory for Individuals online student quiz.  
MyCreativeSkills.com. (2012). Do You Have the Skills You Need to Express Your Creativity?  
Retrieved from <http://mycreativitieskills.com/> Nov 2013
- Understanding Right vs. Left Brain Theories  
Cherry, Kendra. (undated). Left Brain vs Right Brain. Retrieved from  
<http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/a/left-brain-right-brain.htm> Nov 2013
- Interactive Online Brain Games  
Luminosity.com. (undated). Improve your brain health and performance. Retrieved from  
[http://www.lumosity.com/landing\\_pages/188?gclid=COiqlpfe47YCFUYaOgodqmEAEQ](http://www.lumosity.com/landing_pages/188?gclid=COiqlpfe47YCFUYaOgodqmEAEQ) Nov 2013
- Online Creativity Games, Creative Thinking Exercises, and Creative Projects Creative Games.net.  
CreativityGames.net. (2013). Creativity Brain Training Games. Retrieved from  
<http://creativitygames.net/> Nov 2013
- Teacher resource site for games that stimulate creativity and increase self-knowledge and brainstorming activities  
McGraw-Hill Education, GlenCoe Online. (undated). Creative Thinking Activities and Games.  
Retrieved from <http://www.glencoe.com/sec/busadmin/entre/teacher/creative/> Nov 2013
- Creative thinking games and exercises, creative things to do when students are bored, creativity in the classroom  
Shukla, Ishani Chatterjee. (2012). Creative Thinking Games. Retrieved from  
<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/creative-thinking-games.html> Nov 2013
- Creativity defined, links to other creativity websites  
Wilson, Dr. Leslie Owen. (2007). On Defining Creativity. Retrieved from  
<http://www4.uwsp.edu/education/lwilson/creativ/define.htm> Nov 2013
- Creativity Post Online Magazine  
CreativityPost.com. (2011). Twelve Things You Were Not Taught in School About Creative Thinking.  
Retrieved from  
[http://www.creativitypost.com/create/twelve\\_things\\_you\\_were\\_not\\_taught\\_in\\_school\\_about\\_creative\\_thinking](http://www.creativitypost.com/create/twelve_things_you_were_not_taught_in_school_about_creative_thinking) Nov 2013

## 7.06 Student Worksheet for Developing Ideas for Creative Projects

The following material is designed to help students develop ideas for creative projects. It can be reformatted and expanded by staff for students to use either individually or in small groups.

### Personal Creative Preferences

Check or circle the creative activities you are interested in, like, and/or currently do. Add examples and other ideas as needed. If writing is difficult, a staff member can help.

- Art (*Examples: drawing, painting, cartooning, animation, etc.*)
- Music (*Examples: playing it, listening to it, how I respond to it*)
- Food and cooking (*Examples: making up or altering recipes and food combinations, decorating*)
- Dance and movement
- Ideas (*Examples: inventions, theories, explanations*)
- Fashion (*Examples: how I dress, style my hair, accessorize, color, etc.*)
- Inventing things (*Examples: using a model, finding random parts*)
- Words (*Examples: stories, poems, writing, jokes, puns, etc.*)
- Ways to approach a task (*Example: I like to find my own way to do things*)
- Making up games
- Planning events, parties, celebrations
- Making movies
- Photography
- Decorating a room

### Reflecting on Personal Creativity

1. What are the best parts of my day for being creative? Generate daily examples (*Examples: picking what to wear based on weather or mood, selecting morning wake up music to energize me*)
2. Are there times in my day when I am more naturally creative than other times? Why do I think that is? (*Example: In art class, I feel tired / rushed / have to follow specific rules*)
3. Are there times in my day where I would like be more creative to make my day more interesting or less boring? (*Example: walk a different route than usual to get somewhere*)
4. What gets in the way of my being creative? (*Examples: low confidence, I am worried what others might think, I cannot come up with ideas on my own, I get stuck because I want it to be perfect, I don't want to be judged by others, I am okay once I get going but I have trouble getting started*)

5. What helps me feel creative? *(Examples: creating with other people, music, movement, alone time, quiet, a lot of space, getting support and encouragement from others, having a list to follow, being relaxed, having a snack, exercising)*
6. How do I use my creativity on special occasions? *(Examples: gift buying, decorating for holidays, planning a birthday meal, baking a cake, making my own Halloween costumes)*
7. What creative activities would I like to try? What things and people do I need to help it go well or to begin the brainstorming and planning process?
8. What famous people do I think are creative? How are they creative?
9. Who in my life is creative? How do they show their creativity? Could I learn some tips from them?
10. If you could interview three famous creative people, who would they be? What would you ask them?
11. If you could invent something to make your life easier, what would it be?

## 7.07 Forms and Benefits of Creative Expression

The following list is designed to assist staff in identifying creative activities that may be good matches for individual students considering their personal strengths, challenges, needs, and developmental levels (physical, social, emotional, cognitive).

### Movement

#### Dance: Formal

Benefits:

- Increases body awareness (Example: body positioning, avoid bumping into other dancing couples)
- Increases tolerance for touching and being in close proximity with dance partner
- Strengthens sequential motor movements (following a specific sequence of prescribed steps and movements)
- Strengthens cross-body and overall coordination, balance, and movement flexibility
- Reinforces motor memory (moving from being over-dependent on watching others or following steps laid in floor to integrating the movements into memory)
- Exposes individual to potential hobby or activity (Examples: dance lessons, dance competitions)
- Increases exposure to a variety of musical styles (Example: tango vs. waltz, etc.) and identifying preferences in musical tastes
- Increases ability to manage positive interactions with an instructor (Examples: how to receive correction, feedback, compliments)
- Provides practice with anxiety management (Examples: when things go wrong, when I can't master a particular movement or step)
- Provides practice keeping attention on task and reducing negative interference from self-consciousness or comparing self to others
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations for accomplishing movement tasks
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

#### Dance: Informal

Benefits:

- Increases body awareness (*Example: body positioning, avoid bumping into other dancing couples*)
- Strengthens cross-body and overall coordination, balance, and flexibility in movement
- Exposes individual to potential hobby or activity (*Examples: collecting music, free-form dancing at home or at concerts where dancing is allowed*)

- Explores ways free-form dancing can be a stress-reducer, a way to energize the body if feeling lethargic, a way to work through difficult emotions
- Increases exposure to a variety of musical styles and identifying preferences in musical tastes
- Reduces self-consciousness
- Works with the concept that there is no “right” or “wrong” way to do something creative
- Increases opportunities to activate creativity and find ideas within oneself (rather requiring someone to tell them what to do or how to do it).
- Increases range of body movement
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### **Mime: Simple and concrete scenarios and situations**

*Examples: Wind blowing, rainstorm, cleaning room*

Benefits:

- Provides practice with visualizing and conceptualizing a scenario
- Strengthens skills in non-verbal communication
- Activates parts to whole thinking – what is the overall impression/scene I want to create and what elements do I have to include so my audience can understand?
- Provides opportunities to work on sequence (have to play actions out in a specific sequence so they can be understood)
- Activates creativity and brainstorming
- Increases self-control and experience following guidelines of an exercise (*Examples: no talking, can't touch the “audience”, etc.*)
- Improves emotional regulation (managing frustration, excitement, etc. inherent in the exercise)
- Exercises creative brainstorming of individualized strategies and accommodations for how to navigate with increased success
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### **Mime: Complex and nuanced scenarios and situations**

*Examples: Social interactions such as attending a party, expressions of emotion, more details and dimensions added to the scenario*

Benefits:

- Strengthens complex and abstract visualization and conceptualization
- Strengthens social cognition
- Strengthen skills in non-verbal communication
- Strengthens body awareness and motor planning

- Activates parts to whole thinking – what is the overall impression/scene I want to create and what elements do I have to include so my audience can understand?
- Provides opportunities to work on sequence (have to play actions out in a specific sequence so they can be understood)
- Activates creativity and brainstorming
- Increases self-control and experience following guidelines of an exercise (*Examples: no talking, can't touch the "audience"*)
- Improves emotional regulation (managing frustration, excitement, etc. inherent in exercise)
- Provides executive function practice (organizing and planning scenarios, self-monitoring)
- Provides creative problem solving practice (if audience is not understanding it, what else can you do to display meaning without words?)
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Mime: Solo

#### Benefits:

- Improves self-management (reduces anxiety, etc.)
- Builds independence
- Strengthens ability to rely on one's own ideas and creativity

### Mime: With peers

#### Benefits:

- Provides practice with peer collaboration
- Provides opportunities to strengthen executive function skills (pre-discussion, coordination of roles and planning prior to starting mime, adjusting skit as needed, etc.)
- Provides practice with managing emotions (frustration, trying to control, managing anxiety over skit difficulties)
- Increases opportunities to collaborate creatively

### Role Play and Improvisation

#### Benefits:

- Strengthens critical thinking
- Practices expressive and receptive language
- Practices body language (reading and displaying)
- Improves rhythm and timing in social interactions
- Strengthens motor planning

- Raises awareness and skills in perspective-taking and seeing the experience of others as different than one's own
- Increases awareness of how one's actions are perceived and interpreted by another
- Practices social problem solving
- Practices parts to whole thinking (big picture meaning and which details to include)
- Strengthens capacity to manage unexpected changes or responses
- Activates creativity and brainstorming
- Strengthens ability to conceptualize (visualize a scenario) and understand what the associated actions and feelings are
- Improves collaboration and negotiation skills
- Provides practice preparing for situations and reduces anxiety about them
- Provides a method for processing the emotions and confusion surrounding an event that has already occurred
- Provides practice for multiple ways to handle a situation
- Reinforces understanding of causal relationships and contingency thinking
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career or internship interest such as theater or acting? What is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Group movement games

#### Benefits:

- Improves ability to follow verbal directions
- Strengthens rule use, step-wisdom, and sequencing
- Provides social cognition practice (negotiating, social problem solving, collaborating, coordinating, teamwork, turn taking, competition, playing fair, etc.)
- Provides practice in managing emotions (frustrations, anxiety, anger, impatience waiting turn)
- Increases opportunity to engage the body, raise body awareness, and add movement to the day
- Increases tolerance for group activities
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Board games involving movement

#### Benefits:

- Improves ability to follow verbal and written directions
- Strengthens rule use, step-wisdom, and sequencing

- Provides social cognition practice (negotiating, social problem solving, collaborating, coordinating, teamwork, turn taking, competition, playing fair)
- Provides practice in managing emotions (frustrations, anxiety, anger, impatience waiting turn, managing losing and winning)
- Provides opportunity to engage the body, raise body awareness, and add movement to the day
- Increases tolerance for group activities
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Yoga, Tai Chi, Martial Arts, etc.

#### Benefits:

- Improves following steps and sequences
- Improves understanding ways in which one's own creativity can be incorporated into an activity that has a specific protocol (although the sequence may be predetermined, an individual can have her own style or flair for how she navigates the steps, and in some cases, such as yoga, can modify some of the movements or body positioning creatively)
- Increases endurance
- Reinforces understanding of skill building – takes a lot of practice and incremental progress to reach mastery
- Provides a context for personal goal setting (*Example: want to get to purple belt*)
- Increases body awareness (*Example: body positioning, avoid bumping into others*)
- Increases tolerance for instructional touching and being in close proximity with another
- Strengthens sequential motor movements (following a specific sequence of prescribed steps and movements)
- Strengthens cross-body and overall coordination, balance, and movement flexibility
- Reinforces motor memory (moving from being overly dependent on watching others or following steps laid out on the floor to integrating the movements into memory)
- Exposes individual to potential ongoing hobby or activity (*Examples: lessons, competitions, learning about subject*)
- Increases ability to manage potentially challenging interactions with an instructor (*Examples: how to receive correction, feedback, compliments*)
- Practices anxiety management (*Examples: getting confused in a movement sequence, things going wrong, can't master a particular movement or step*)
- Practices keeping attention on task and reducing negative interference from feeling self-conscious or comparing self to others
- Practices delayed gratification (takes practice and time to get good)

- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

## Physical Education

### Benefits:

- Improves following verbal directions
- Strengthens rule use, step-wisdom, and sequencing
- Provides social cognition practice (*Examples: negotiating, social problem solving, collaborating, coordinating, teamwork, turn-taking, competition, playing fair, etc.*)
- Provides practice in managing emotions (frustrations, anxiety, anger, failure, impatience waiting turn, etc.)
- Provides opportunity to engage the body, raise body awareness, and add movement to the day
- Increases tolerance for group activities
- Increases ability to manage potentially challenging interactions with an instructor (*Examples: how to receive correction, feedback, compliments, etc.*)
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Explores ways to creatively approach or modify game/exercise
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

## Technology and Technological Arts

### Computer art and animation

### Benefits:

- Increases skills in technology use (*Examples: how to install a program, use tutorials, etc.*)
- Teaches how to use technology for creative purposes (*Example: student-generated designs*)
- Improves creative brainstorming and idea generation (*Examples: topics, themes, landscapes, color, story line*)
- Gives experience looking for inspiration and ideas by inspecting what other people have done
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career or internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Still photography

Benefits:

- Improves attention, selection, and creative use of perspective, angles, proximity to object
- Increases attention to detail
- Provides context for creative brainstorming to develop ideas for photographic themes and compositions
- Provides context for trouble shooting problems – creative problem solving
- Provides opportunity to develop mentor relationship
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like it, how does it benefit me, does this tie to a potential career/internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Photographic film development

Benefits:

- Improves ability to following directions
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career/internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Digital photo editing

Benefits:

- Improves ability to following directions
- Provides context for creativity (playing with format, color, presentation, cropping, lighting)
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career/internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

## Video filming

### Benefits:

- Builds creativity through process of brainstorming, research, and subject selection
- Builds skills operating equipment
- Learns to express creativity (filming angles, lighting, background, close-ups)
- Strengthens ability, flexibility, and willingness to edit/revise own work
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career/internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

## Audio recording

### Benefits:

- Learns creativity through process of brainstorming project idea, research, and subject selection
- Builds skills operating equipment
- Learns to express creativity (sound levels, adding background music, flow of recording)
- Learns editing skills and strengthens ability, flexibility, and willingness to edit/revise own work
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career/internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

## Video game design

### Benefits:

- Builds creativity through process of brainstorming project idea, research and subject selection
- Builds skills operating equipment
- Learns to express creativity (selecting game elements, characters, background, themes)
- Learns editing skills and strengthen ability, flexibility, and willingness to edit/revise own work
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career/internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Simulation game playing

(Sim City and other self-guided computer games)

Benefits:

- Builds creativity through process of working through the challenges of the game
- Reinforces step-wisdom and preparedness (need to first read instructions or watch tutorials)
- Learns skills involving rules and guidelines for operating program
- Learns skills involving physical manipulation of the controls (getting the hardware and software to do what you want it to do)
- Learns to express creativity (selecting elements, characters, background, themes, templates)
- Provides opportunities for creative problem solving
- Reinforces collaboration, turn-taking, compromise, social problem solving and negotiation if is a group activity
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like the activity, how does it benefit me, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Art with various physical materials

(Drawing, cartooning, painting, self-portraits, mixed media, clay, collage, nature-based art, beadwork, leatherwork)

Benefits:

- Improves fine motor skills
- Improves ability to follow verbal and written instructions and demonstrations
- Provides opportunities for brainstorming and creativity surrounding selection of materials and development of concept
- Learns how to gain inspiration from other people's art (*Examples: looking at magazines, visiting art museums, using internet*)
- Provides opportunities for creative brainstorming and idea generation (topics, themes, style, color)
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Provides practice managing task-specific emotions such as frustration or failure
- Provides practice managing negative thoughts (*Examples: I can't do art, I am bad at this, free floating anxiety triggered by art, bad past experiences in art classes*)
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges

- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career or internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Project-based art (individual and group)

Board game design; building models; sewing; making clothing, costumes, pillows, or other items; woodworking; murals; outdoor art projects: benches, gardens, garden art, labyrinths, animal- or plant-based art; functional art, building design/architecture; scrapbooking; making a comic book; collecting something and displaying it.

#### Benefits:

- Practices fine motor skills
- Practices following verbal and written instructions and demonstrations
- Provides context for brainstorming and creativity involving selection of materials and development of concept
- Provides opportunities to gain inspiration from other people's art projects
- Provides opportunities for creative brainstorming and idea generation (topics, themes, style, color)
- Provides opportunities for mentor relationships
- Provides practice managing task-specific emotions such as frustration or failure
- Provides practice managing negative thoughts (*Examples: I can't do this, I am bad at this, free floating anxiety triggered by art projects, bad past outcomes from projects*)
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career or internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Music

Instrument playing (formal and improvised), listening, composing, instrument making, mash-ups, creating a compilation of favorite music to reflect a certain mood.

#### Benefits:

- Practices fine motor skills
- Practices following verbal and written instructions and demonstrations; learning through modeling and observation (in person, videos)
- Provides opportunities for brainstorming and creativity involving selection of instrument or activity
- Provides opportunities to gain inspiration from other people's musical achievements (*Examples: listening to works, researching on line, watching videos*)

- Provides opportunities for creative brainstorming and idea generation
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Provides practice managing task-specific emotions such as frustration or failure
- Provides practice managing negative thoughts (*Examples: I am not musical, I am bad at this, free floating anxiety triggered by art, bad past experiences in art classes*)
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career or internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Language Arts

Poetry, oral storytelling, short story writing, memoirs, non-fiction writing, play writing, script writing, journaling, acting, making up riddles and jokes, debate, writing blogs, alternative history writing (*Example: what would the world be like if dinosaurs did not die out?*).

Benefits:

- Provides practice with expressive language (oral and written)
- Provides practice with executive function skills (*Examples: designing plan, organizing, plan implementation and follow through, evaluation of progress and end results, keeping track of details of project, time-management*)
- Provides practice with following verbal and written instructions, demonstrations, and examples
- Provides opportunities for brainstorming and creativity surrounding selection and development of concept
- Increases inspiration from other people's work in the given area (*Examples: looking at pictures in magazines, visit theater, internet, video clips, articles*)
- Provides opportunities for creative brainstorming and idea generation (topics, themes, style)
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Provides practice managing task specific emotions such as frustration, failure, delaying gratification, managing impatience
- Provides practice managing negative thoughts (*Examples: I'm not smart enough to do this, this is too hard, I am bad at this, anxiety triggered by past bad experiences in given area*)
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges
- Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career or internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Social/relational activities

Interviewing, poll taking, planning a social event, planning a fund raising event, representing school at a community event, planning and throwing a party, making up a group game, team building and group problem solving activities.

#### Benefits:

- Provides opportunities for social cognition and skills work
- Provides opportunities for receptive and expressive language skill building
- Practice with executive functions (*Examples: designing plan, organizing, plan implementation and follow through, evaluation of progress and end result, keeping track of details of project, time-management, predicting outcomes*)
- Provide practice establishing project guidelines
- Provides opportunities for brainstorming and creativity surrounding selection of materials and development of concept
- Increases inspiration from other people's work (*Examples: look at pictures in magazines, finding examples, watching videos, internet research*)
- Provides opportunities for creative brainstorming and idea generation (topics, themes)
- Provides opportunities to develop mentor relationships
- Provides practice managing task specific emotions such as frustration, failure, overwhelm
- Provides practice managing responsibilities and personal accountability
- Provides practice managing negative thoughts (*Examples: I can't do this, I am bad at this, anxiety from past bad experiences*)
- Improves ability to develop creative strategies and accommodations to minimize interference from challenges Improves self-evaluation: what emotions arise, do I like this activity, how does it benefit me, does it tie to a potential career or internship interest, what is my stamina/endurance for this activity, how often do I want to do it?

### Other areas for creative expression

- Visualization
- Meditation
- Math-based art
- Logic and problem solving puzzles
- Entering a contest
- Talent show
- Visual puzzles
- Imagining a product and creating an advertising campaign or slogan
- Creating an imaginary world/city and its inhabitants

### 7.08 Advisor Guide Sheets for Student Creativity Development

The following guide sheets are intended to

- Help advisors track overall student progress and exposure to creativity
- Identify difficulties, obstacles, or other impediments to their advisee’s creative exploration
- Generate needed adjustments, accommodations, and strategies
- Track efficacy of interventions (adjustments, strategies, accommodations)
- Ensure student’s program experience incorporates creative expression
- Create a growing list of creative ideas, projects, and activities student has an expressed interest in for current and future scheduling purposes
- Organize needs, materials, personnel, and other aspects of a given project
- Help advisors track progress and outcome of current or ongoing advisee’s creative projects

These guide sheets are used at the discretion of the team or program director. This material should be reformatted by users based on need.

#### Tracking Form

Tracks overall student progress with creative expression and exposure to creativity

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

List all creative elements currently present in student’s schedule (classes, groups, activities, lessons, projects)

Daily:

Weekly:

Ongoing projects:

For each, describe:

- **Current** difficulties
- **Goals** (are there stated goals, and if so what are the goals of participants in this creative endeavor?)
- **Level of participation** (highly engaged, resistant, low, intermittent involvement, erratic bursts of engagement, needs ongoing encouragement, when student needs help and with what? generating own creative ideas vs. following lead of others, adding ideas to supplement ideas of others, no contributions)
- **Emotional reactivity** (emotions that interfere or impede participation, such as anxiety, excitement, etc.)
- **Social interactions** (positive, difficulties arising when collaborating with peers?)
- **Environmental sensitivities** (need for adjustments)
- **Regulation** (able to remain regulated, need for regulation support)
- **Staff** (which staff are involved and what roles do they take with the student)
- **Current adjustments, accommodations, and strategies** that have been put in place to address obstacles and challenges
- **Revised goals** based on progress

### Creating and Reflecting on Ideas, Projects, and Activities for Creative Expression

For each student, create a list of potential creative endeavors. Revisit the list and revise with student throughout the year. As the student adds each item to the list, try to stretch their critical thinking by asking them to evaluate the following:

- How did I come up with my idea? (*Examples: on my own, inspired by a peer, movie, news*)
- What do I hope to get from this experience? (*Examples: fun, learning, career exploration, peer bonding, build a specific skill,*)
- Does this idea or project involve just me or do I have to think about other people?
- What am I expecting will be the outcome if I do it?
- Is this the right time to try out this idea? If not, is there a better time and why?
- Ask any additional thought-provoking questions as needed.

Once many ideas are discussed and examined at least one idea will likely rise to the top as something the individual will commit to doing. Use the *Making Things Happen* guidelines on the next page to help students get started.

### Making Things Happen

This list provides guiding questions to help students filter their ideas further for creative projects. Matters of *feasibility* and *how to proceed* are examined more closely. Use this list for the refinement process, and to engage students in critical thinking and executive functions.

<b>Idea</b>	Does this idea need to be stated more clearly and in more detail? Do I need to spend some time organizing my thoughts about it? Do I need help with this?
<b>People</b>	Who can I involve so the idea becomes a success? How might I do this?
<b>Needs</b>	What materials or supplies do I need for this idea, activity, or project to go well?
<b>Logistics</b>	How will I get the materials, supplies, and people the project will require? How long might it take to arrange all this? ( <i>Examples: buying materials, renting space</i> )
<b>Cost</b>	Considering all the above, what might be the final cost of the project?
<b>Other details</b>	Considering all the above, when might be the best time to try this idea? How much organization is needed? From whom do I need to get permission? etc.

## 7.09 Teacher Resources

### Steps to Maximize Imagination

Carson, Shelley. *Your creative brain: seven steps to maximize imagination, productivity, and innovation in your life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010. Print.

### Creativity In the Classroom

Starko, Alane Jordan. *Creativity in the Classroom: Schools of Curious Delight*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. Print.

### Handbook of Creativity

Kaufman, James C., and Robert J. Sternberg. *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

### Fostering Creativity in the Classroom

Cropley, Arthur J. *More Ways Than One: Fostering Creativity in the Classroo*. N.p.: Praeger, 1992. Print

### Creative Therapy

Tubbs, Janet. *Creative Therapy for Children with Autism, ADD, and Asperger's: [using Artistic Creativity to Reach, Teach, and Touch Our Children]*. Garden City Park, NY: Square One, 2008. Print.

### Experiential Learning

Beard, Colin, John P. Wilson, and Colin Beard. *Experiential Learning: A Best Practice Handbook for Educators and Trainers*. London: Kogan Page, 2006. Print

### 7.10 In Summary

Establishing creative expression as a program-wide principle gives students the widest range of opportunities to create their own unique way of stepping into independence and adulthood. With creativity as a central focus, teachers are free to deliver content in exciting and inspiring ways, and take advantage of their own creativity by modeling its use and value in thinking, doing, and being.

## 7.11 References

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### Steps to Maximize Imagination

Carson, Shelley. Your creative brain: seven steps to maximize imagination, productivity, and innovation in your life. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010. Print.

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Starko, Alane Jordan. *Creativity in the Classroom: Schools of Curious Delight*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2010. Print.

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**Case Histories**

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