Creative Thinking and Play

At the 2008 Serious Play conference, designer Tim Brown talks about the powerful relationship between creative thinking and play. *Tim Brown is the CEO of the "innovation and design" firm IDEO.* http://www.ideo.com/

Bob Mckim was a creativity researcher in the 1960s and 1970s and led the Stanford University Design Programme. He had his design students draw the person next to them, as quickly as they could. Embarrassment was a common adult response; evidence that we fear the judgement of our pears and we are embarrassed about showing our ideas to people we think of as our peers. It's this fear that causes us to be conservative in our thinking.

Would younger kids, doing the same exercise, display embarrassment?
Do you always put your hand up and attempt to answer a teacher's question? If not, why not?

Research into play shows that kids who are secure in their environment, are the ones who feel most free to play. As an artist or designer you need a place where there is the same kind of security to take creative risks. Creative companies often have symbols to remind people to be playful.

| IDEO VW meeting room | Pixar artists decorated huts | Googleplex dinosaur skeleton + flamingos? |

Playfulness helps us get to better creative solutions.

Inherent creativity of a child, for example, kids may play with the box a gift came in and not the gift. With regards to exploration, you can do a lot more with boxes than you can with even the most sophisticated of toys. **As we get older we tend to forget playful activities**

Bob Mckim came up with the Thirty Circles Test; the purpose is to produce quantity.
One thing we do more as we grow up is self edit ideas. Our desire to be original can be a form of editing. Do you value the ability to explore lots of things?

In 1966 Mckim published a paper describing an experiment using the Perdue Creativity Test also known as 'how many uses can you find for a paper clip?' He created a scenario that shocked the participants out of their normal way of thinking. **They forget the adult behaviours that were getting in the way of their ideas.**
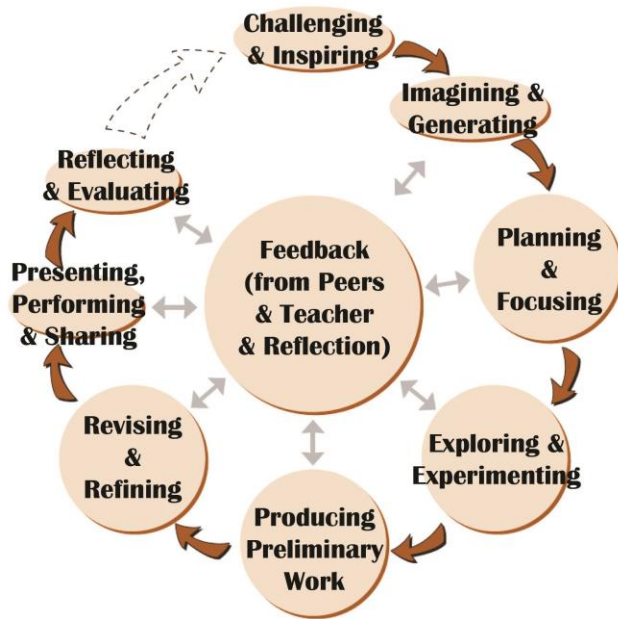
IDEO Brainstorming Rules:
Defer judgement
Go for quantity

Can you have rules about creativity? Do we need them to break the old rules/norms that we bring to the creative process?

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

- Challenging & Inspiring
- Imagining & Generating
- Reflecting & Evaluating
- Feedback (from Peers & Teacher & Reflection)
- Planning & Focusing
- Presenting, Performing & Sharing
- Revising & Refining
- Producing Preliminary Work
- Exploring & Experimenting

Eames experimented with plywood for many years without have one single goal in mind- they followed what was interesting to them. They went from designing splints for soldiers coming out of WWII and the Korean War to experimenting with chairs.

Eames came up with designs that we know today as iconic solutions.

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Eames fabric pattern

"By approaching every project with the following questions: Does it interest and intrigue us? Can we make it better? **Will we have "serious fun" doing it**? *Charles and Ray Eames* made major contributions to modern architecture and furniture. They also worked in the fields of industrial and graphic design, fine art and film

The supplies that encourage playful modes of thinking are taken away as children progress through the grades.

Play is not anarchy. Kids playing cops and robbers are playing to a script they have agreed to. **Collaboration**: Co-negotiation leads to productive play. As artists/designers/actors we need to be able to transition in and out of play as well. (You can be both playful and serious. Need playfulness when generating ideas but need to be able to come back, perhaps as a group and reflect on what you have achieved.)
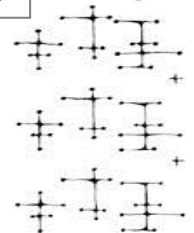
SUMMARY
We need trust to play
We need trust to be creative

Behaviours we learnt as kids (often used to learn/make sense of the world) become useful to us as adults:
EXPLORATION: GO FOR QUANTITY
BUILDING: THINK WITH YOUR HANDS
ROLE PLAY: ACT IT OUT

Building:
Think with your hands