

Nurturing Independence and Individuality

In order to grow, children need to develop independence. Building independence is part of an individual's social skills; self-reliance allows the child to feel they have control over their life. Developing autonomy also gives the child a sense of self-efficacy ('I can do it on my own') which promotes self-esteem and confidence, and promotes motivation and perseverance in school. Nurturing individuality is the most empathetic and effective way of teaching children to fly. Individuality encourages and allows children to develop and grow as a unique child.

Here is a poem that demonstrates that there is never a single right answer where creativity is concerned, there are always many possibilities to choose from.

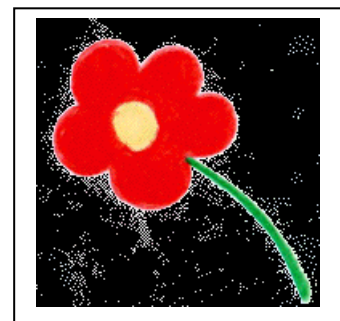
The Little Boy

Once a little boy went to school.
He was quite a little boy.
And it was quite a big school.
But when the little boy
Found that he could go to his room
By walking right in from the door outside,
He was happy.
And the school did not seem
Quite so big any more.

One morning,
When the little boy had been in school a while,
The teacher said:
"Today we are going to make a picture."
"Good!" thought the little boy.
He liked to make pictures.
He could make all kinds:
Lions and tigers,
Chickens and cows,
Trains and boats –
And he took out his box of crayons
And began to draw.

But the teacher said:
"Wait! It is not time to begin!"
And she waited until everyone looked ready.
"Now," said the teacher,
"We are going to make flowers."
"Good!" thought the little boy,
He liked to make flowers,
And he began to make beautiful ones
With his pink and orange and blue crayons.

But the teacher said,
"Wait! And I will show you how."
And she drew a flower on the blackboard.



It was red, with a green stem.
"There," said the teacher.
"Now you may begin."
The little boy looked at the teacher's flower.
Then he looked at his own flower,
He liked his flower better than the teacher's.
But he did not say this,
He just turned his paper over
And made a flower like the teacher's.
It was red, with a green stem.



On another day,
When the little boy had opened
The door from the outside all by himself,
The teacher said,
"Today we are going to make something with clay."
"Good!" thought the boy.
He liked clay.

He could make all kinds of things with clay:
Snakes and snowmen,
Elephants and mice,
Cars and trucks –
And he began to pull and pinch
His ball of clay.

But the teacher said,
"Wait! And I will show you how."
And she showed everyone how to make
One deep dish.
"There," said the teacher.
"Now you may begin."

The little boy looked at the teacher's dish
Then he looked at his own.
He liked his dish better than the teacher's
But he did not say this,
He just rolled his clay into a big ball again,
And made a dish like the teacher's.
It was a deep dish.

And pretty soon
The little boy learned to wait
And to watch,
And to make things just like the teacher.
And pretty soon
He didn't make things of his own anymore.
Then it happened
That the little boy and his family
Moved to another house,
In another city,
And the little boy
Had to go to another school

This school was even bigger
Than the other one,
And there was no door from the outside
Into his room.
He had to go up some big steps,
And walk down a long hall
To get to his room.
And the very first day
He was there, the teacher said,
“Today we are going to make a picture.”

“Good!” thought the little boy,
And he waited for the teacher
To tell him what to do
But the teacher didn’t say anything.
She just walked around the room.
When she came to the little boy,
She said, “Don’t you want to make a picture?”
“Yes,” said the little boy.
“What are we going to make?”
“I don’t know until you make it,” said the teacher.

“How shall I make it?” asked the little boy.
“Why, any way you like,” said the teacher.
“And any colour?” asked the little boy.
“Any colour,” said the teacher,
“If everyone made the same picture,
And used the same colours,
How would I know who made what,
“And which was which?”
“I don’t know,” said the little boy.
And he began to draw a flower.
It was red, with a green stem.

~ Helen E. Buckley

There is much wisdom in this simple poem. How can we expect learners to discover their own creativity if we expect them to wait until we have told them what we think it is? How can we expect them to be creative if we convince them, through our practices, that they must only look for one right answer to a challenge that demands their creativity? How can we expect children to create their own ways to discover the many possible answers to their own creative challenges in life if we never give them a chance to create their own ecologies for learning while they are engaged in formal learning?

Therefore, when we ask children to draw a flower – this is their response.



We ask parents to work with us to enable children to develop a growth mindset.

If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don't have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence.

— Carol Dweck

