Is Using a Creative Process an Academic Advantage?

Do you get stressed when you look at your homework planner? Do you lack in organisational skills? And do you lose focus after only a short period of time?

Then **you** need a creative process!

Creativity is something I feel very strongly about, it is the answer to all my problems: not only does it allow me to think things through flexibly - using all my initiation to explore new ideas and creative pathways - but it gives me the courage to make challenging assumptions and grants me full access to my problem solving abilities.

Creativity is, as Oxford neatly puts it: "The use of imagination or original ideas to create something; inventiveness". That's quite a good overview, but for me, creativity is used in everything: from generating homework to improving schools.

You might not think of it, but you use a creative **process** for everything, it's just not always formalised. But to find out why it can help our learning, we have to know what it is?

'The Creative Process'. A process for solving problems, or answering questions, is a great way of utilising your mental resources and not getting stuck on a piece of work for too long; if you follow it correctly, you can't go wrong. The process that **I** follow has the steps: Discover, Make, Observe, and Repeat.

Lets go over each of the steps individually.

In the first step, **Discover**, you plan your work. Empathise; Getting down key information that you don't always think of helps you to progress seamlessly through your work. Personally, I like to come up with question based success criteria, which normally go something like: does it appeal to my target audience? Does it solve their problem ? And do I convey my message well?

Once you have made your success criteria, you can start to come up with ideas for how you'll tackle the problem, whether the problem is your homework, or a poor schooling system.

In the **Make** step, you apply your ideas from the previous step to try and solve the problem. This could entail writing the essays first draft; or increasing punishments to enforce discipline in classes.

Next, the **Observe** step: a key part of the process, where you look at what you have achieved, see if it meets the success criteria, and ask yourself, "did I succeed?"

Finally, remember to **repeat** the process in order to check your outcome and decide how to fix flaws in your handiwork do this step as much as you like.

This sequence of steps is not fixed, but rather fluid. You can go backwards and forwards throughout the process without disrupting the flow, because when you are making, you can also be discovering new things about your field of work.

Hopefully, now that we've been through this together, you should be able to see some of the applications for a process like this outside of 'creative' tasks. For example, if you were intending to make a school better, you may want students to gain the most benefit from the short 5 hours of lessons that we

have a day. You could ask, "how might we increase the productivity of our students during their lessons?" (Note the "how might we..." question, this allows people to come up with a wider range of possible solutions). Then, still in the **discovery** step, people could contribute different ideas as the answer, for example: changing the teaching methods; changing the lesson length; or increasing break frequency or length.

Next, test each suggestion. Make changes to the various aspects of education discussed in your discovery phase, and conduct analysis on various subjects with various classes of varying abilities, to see how the teaching changes have effects on how the students learn.

Observe the results, if what you produced had a good outcome: repeat the discovery phase to find out how you could improve the product further, and if you failed completely: repeat the process to come up with a different battle strategy.

Another example is within myself writing this speech, I started with a plan, incorporating success criteria, and mentally discovered my target audience (you guys) and therefore the level of linguistics I would utilise during the speech. I also planned my anecdotes towards your level of intelligence, making sure to include appropriate examples you would recognise.

Then I moved onto to making my speech content, the waffling stream you're hearing now. On my first attempt I tried to get everything down on the page and didn't mentally rule anything out, but often even I can find this process to be challenging at the least, and is a skill I have not yet mastered (shock!).

After my first draft, I was ready to look at my work and check for: fluency, accuracy and content suitable to my target audience, not forgetting the all important success criteria (which I keep bringing up here and there). If anything was wrong, I repeated the process to discover what to change, then I made the change, then I checked it again. This allowed me to create an insightful experience for you dear listeners.

That should give you an insight to the process's uses outside of "pure" creativity. Now to discuss, in short points, why you should use a process.

Using a process allows you to be more efficient in your work - as it gives a guide to follow to get things done correctly.

Using a process allows you to be more organised - as if you finish a stage, then when you come back to your work you know what you have to do to continue.

Using a process allows you to be more focused on your work - as you don't worry about the finished outcome if you trust the process.

Using a process allows you to be less stressed about pulling the work out of nowhere - because you have a definitive place to start.

Using a process allows you to work better as a team - as if you all know the process then you can help each other out based on the stage you are on.

Using a process allows you to make yourself more professional - as regularly referring to a process adds credibility to your work when working with someone.

So, to sum up these reasons in one sentence: Using a process gives you a mental maturity which is a huge advantage academically for our generation.