The Homeschool Parents'
How-To Series
- Book 3 -

How to ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY in Your Child

Lynn Dean
Creator of Discover Texas

Foreword

The material for this book, like all the books in the Homeschool Parents' How-To Series, first appeared as a seminar presented at homeschool conventions in my home state of Texas.

Over and over parents responded enthusiastically and asked me to make the material available in book form so they could refer back to the information through the course of their homeschool journey.

I'm happy to do that.

Because the material was designed for presentation in a one-hour workshop setting, these books are short but packed with useable information.

My deepest thanks for this book goes to my mother, an excellent and patient teacher, who sowed the seeds of creativity in me from early childhood. I love you, Mama. I would not be who I am without your devoted influence. I'm grateful to God for you.

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Created to be Creative

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary tells us that someone who is creative is "marked by the ability or power to create"—a definition I don't find particularly helpful. They go on to say that creative people have "the ability to make new things or think new ideas" with the elaboration that this means "creating rather than imitating."

Hmmm...don't we all do that at times in one way or another?

According to another online dictionary, creativity is "the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination."

I found that definition much more helpful, but again, don't we all do that at least to some degree?

Creativity is simply the ability to use old things in new ways or see traditional ideas from a new perspective.

Could it be that we are *all* creative?

Well, we know that God is creative.

And we know that man is created in the image of God.

Therefore we might reason that man has the potential to be creative because God is creative.

If God created us to be creative, why do so many people say, "Oh, I'm not creative"?

Maybe we're just being humble, or maybe it's because creativity is so difficult to define. Let's take a look at what creativity is, where it comes from, and how we can encourage our children in their own creativity.

Creativity Grows (Ideally) as Knowledge Grows

Creative people are, by definition, non-conforming. They do things that haven't been done before and think about options instead of sticking with the old traditional ways.

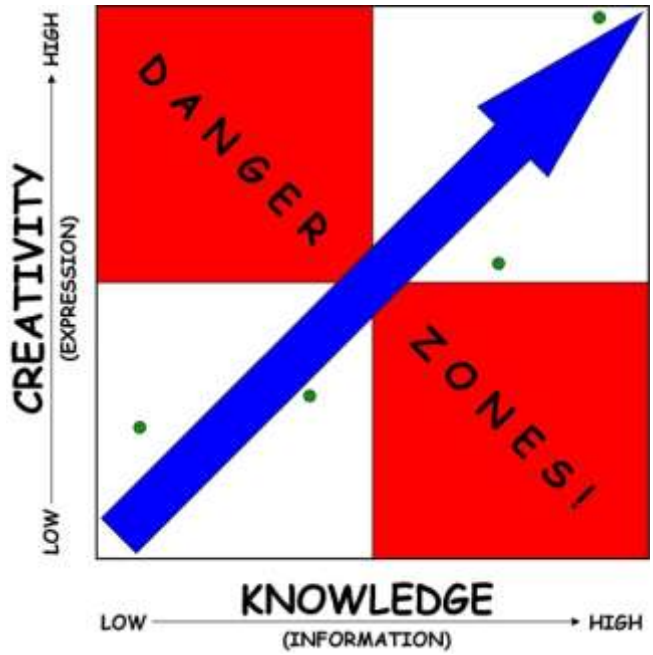
...but not every new idea is a good one.

I know a young girl (whose shall remain nameless) who was challenged to create a new recipe as one of the requirements for a merit badge. The salad she created consisted of shredded cabbage (which she mistook for lettuce) topped with all her favorite things: crumbled Doritos, grapes, and crushed Oreo cookies. She liked Thousand Island dressing, too, so ample quantities of that went on top. Mmmm...not.

It's important that creativity be built on a base of knowledge.

Finding ways to develop knowledge and creativity simultaneously can present a challenge when we're teaching children. Children are naturally curious. As they explore their world and try to figure things out, they come up with delightfully creative ideas about what things are and how things work. Many of their ideas are amusing. They're not always wise, though. They're not always even safe. Our job as parents and teachers is to steer them clear of the danger zones.

Danger Zone #1 - Low Information/Highly Expressive

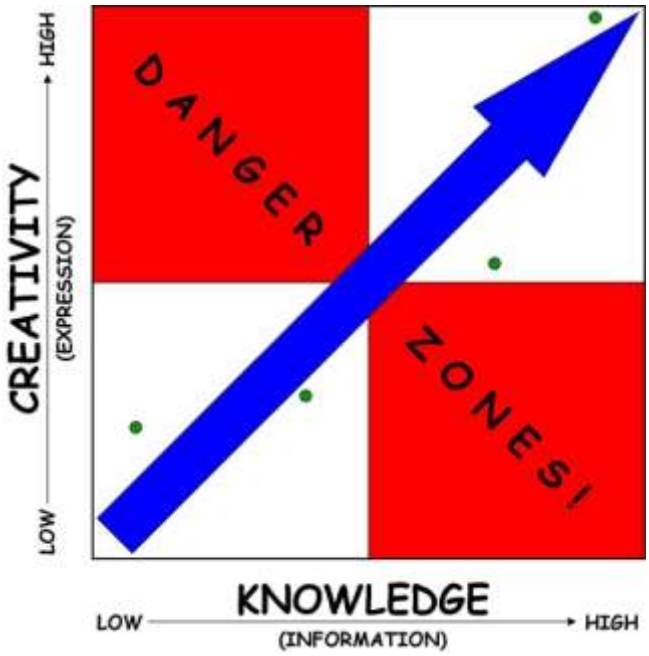


When someone is lacking in knowledge but abounds in creative opinions, we typically describe that person as "sophomoric". The word sophomore comes from the Greek words *sophos*, meaning "wise" and *moros*, meaning "fool".

This is a dangerous combination! A sophomoric person makes risky attempts they don't have the skill to handle safely or makes strong assertions without knowing the necessary underlying facts.

The Bible describes such people in Romans 1:22 saying, " Professing to be wise, they became fools."

Danger Zone #2 - Highly Informed/Afraid to Take Risks



The opposite of a sophomoric person is one who actually has a high degree of information but is afraid to take risks or leave the perceived safety of "what everyone else is doing." This type of low creativity is sometimes referred to as "analysis paralysis". People with analysis paralysis may feel afraid to attempt anything that does not conform to known patterns.

If children are trained to conform at all times, they may become afraid to develop their own talents and opinions out of a sense of false humility. Like the servant in Matthew 25, they may bury the talents the Lord has entrusted to them.

How many opportunities are lost when we are fearful?

We want our children to learn to be safe and wise, but we don't want to squash their creativity in the process.

Is it possible for creativity and knowledge to grow together?

A Pinnacle vs an Upward Spiral

It's a mistake to think of creativity as a special gift that some receive, fully developed, which others simply don't have. Creativity springs from each person's unique perspective, and we are all unique. We might, instead, think of creativity as a character trait we each possess which can be developed progressively over time. If that's the case, then we require practice to grow creatively.

Ideally, creativity and knowledge keep pace with one another as we mature.

The way we teach has a tremendous influence on protecting and developing both knowledge and creativity in ways that are appropriate to the age of the student.

Here's one simple example:

When one of my children was learning his alphabet, I turned the letter A on its side and asked, "Can you think of an animal that looks like this whose name starts with A?" He decided that a capital letter A looked like an alligator's jaws. Surely he was not the first person to come up with that idea, but it doesn't matter. It was the first time *he* had come up with that idea. It was a new thought to *him*. He observed the traditional pattern or shape of the letter and imagined a meaningful new form that helped him remember a sound the letter A makes. He was seeing the traditional alphabet in a new way and had a wonderful time that day drawing A's and turning them into an army of alligators.

His imagination soared beyond this initial activity as he wondered whether he could create an animal using every letter. Soon we had everything from butterflies with B-shaped wings to a zebra with zigzag stripes—an A-Z Animal Alphabet Zoo!

Did I help him? Plant some initial ideas? Make suggestions? Yes. I was his teacher. That's what teachers do. But he was the one who supplied an age-appropriate degree of creativity. That's what students do.

In the early phases a parent, teacher, or mentor may need to demonstrate skills and techniques before they can be used for creative expression. Demonstration is fine when you are teaching creativity. Dictation—giving instructions you mean to be followed precisely—is fine when you are dispensing knowledge, but dictation is not a good way to develop creativity. If you're dictating "this is how you must do it," then the demonstration has become a dispensation of knowledge. The copy will be compared to the original. The child's efforts match yours or they don't, and they "fail".

Motivational author Paul J. Meyer shared a story that illustrates the difference between demonstration and dictation. The story is about a little boy who loved to draw. At home he used paints and crayons to fill reams of paper with drawings of fantastic creatures and brightly-colored flowers that bloomed from his imagination. When he began his formal education, he was delighted when the teacher passed out paper and crayons and announced that they would draw flowers. Immediately he began to fill his paper with colorful designs, but the teacher frowned and took his drawing away. She gave him a blank page and told him to wait for instructions. Then she went to the board and instructed the students to draw a capital letter "I" with their green crayon. "Just like this," she said, and every child drew an "I". On top, she drew a letter "U" and instructed them to do likewise with their red crayons. Nestled in the "U" she drew a "W". "See?" she said, "It's a tulip! Now you may all color in your tulips with your red crayons."

The little boy did as he was told. His flower looked like everyone else's, and the teacher seemed very pleased. She pinned their drawings to the board—a long line of red tulips that looked just alike. Throughout the year the teacher led the class in similar "art lessons".

The next year the little boy had a new teacher. She passed out paper and crayons and invited them to draw.

The little boy just sat and stared at his blank paper.

His new teacher came by to encourage him. "Why haven't you started yet?"

He answered, "I don't know what to do. What am I supposed to draw?"

Failure is disheartening. Criticism and comparison shut down creativity, but praise and the pleasure of success encourage us to try again and dare greatly. Even the success of others can be an encouragement, so long as we use it as inspiration and never to shame or compare.

If your child doesn't feel confident about creating on their own, encourage them to add some touch or small improvement that makes their work uniquely theirs, then increase their knowledge base by looking at the creative work of others and determining what skills the child might want to develop further.

Some children will dive into creativity eagerly, but they may become discouraged if their end product doesn't live up to their (or your) expectations. When we accept creativity as a character trait that is always being developed, failure is only a **F**irst **A**ttempt **I**n **L**earning. You may have to convince a creative perfectionist that learning from each attempt enables us to "fail forward".

The Big Picture Broken Down into Steps

In 1956 Dr. Benjamin Bloom, an educational psychologist, headed a committee of educators who studied the process of learning, from the most basic levels to the most advanced. They published their findings as *Bloom's Taxonomy*. (Taxonomy is a branch of science that deals with classifications and systems.) As part of their study, these experts developed teaching prompts and questions that could be used to challenge students to learn at progressively higher levels.

While it may not be necessary for our purposes to study Bloom's Taxonomy—with all its educational and psychological jargon—in depth, it is very useful to understand a bit about how people learn and how to teach in such a way as to draw out their best. When we understand how one level of learning builds to the next, we can analyze where a child is in their learning process and challenge them to higher-level thinking skills.

Most presentations express Bloom's levels of development using a triangular-shaped graphic, perhaps because creativity is at the pinnacle of academic development. But I wonder if this does not convey the unfortunate and unintended implication that climbing to higher levels of learning is as laborious as building a pyramid—a process that takes seemingly forever just to lay a proper base. If that were true, only the most stalwart scholars could ever dream of making it to the top and becoming truly creative. Fortunately, that's not true.

What is true is that one level builds upon the next—and must if creativity and knowledge are to develop together. Those who are familiar with the classical education model may find a similarity between the progressive levels of grammar, logic, and rhetoric and Bloom's levels of learning. I would suggest, though, that while it may be necessary to shift our emphasis throughout a student's developmental years, it is possible to use teaching methods built on Bloom's prompts and questions to challenge our students and inspire creative thinking at *all* stages of learning.

For that reason, I prefer to represent the levels of learning or thinking as a simple stack. We start by establishing a strong base at the bottom, but we can teach each skill at each stage on a multitude of levels.

Let's take a look at how that works!

REMEMBERING

The most basic step in learning—the place where we all must start—is simply to remember what has been introduced to our mind. We must be able to recall information before we can do anything else with it.

Much like learning to remember the name of a person to whom you've just been introduced, association and repetition are key. When you first introduce a new skill or concept, there are several activities and exercises you might use to present information repeatedly so students become familiar with it in many forms. You might ask them to:

- **circle** or **underline** examples or key ideas
- **define** any new terms
- **describe** what they see
- **duplicate** a sample
- **find** examples
- **identify** parts
- **label** features
- **list** steps or examples
- **memorize** important names or facts
- **match** items that are similar or that belong together
- **name** important components
- **recall** data
- **recognize** features
- **relate** items or steps in sequence
- **repeat** oral information or **copy** written information
- **reproduce** your sample
- **tell** what they see
- **write** down key facts

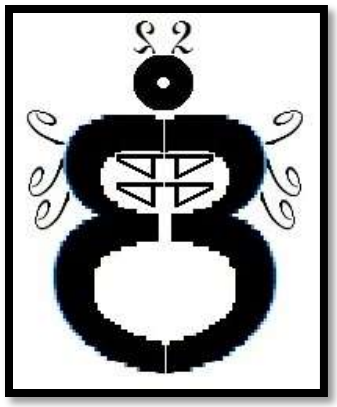
When you ask your student to do these things or see these words on an assignment, you can know that they are laying a foundation at the most basic level of learning.

Remembering is the first step in learning no matter the stage or skill level of the student. A very young child might describe what insects they see in a circle you've marked out on the grass. An older student might describe the features of an insect: six legs, three body parts, two antennae, four wings, and an exoskeleton.

To test their recall, you might ask questions like:

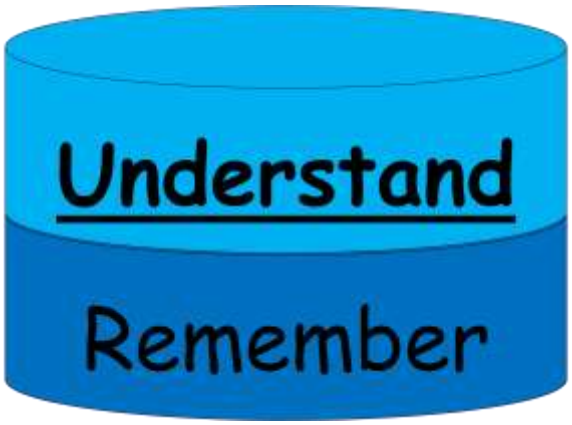
- Who was _____?
- Who said _____?
- What is _____?
- Where is _____?
- How many _____?
- How does _____ happen?
- How would you show _____?
- What came first?
- What happened next?
- Can you explain _____?
- Can you describe _____?
- Can you find _____?
- If you close your eyes, can you picture _____?

At this very early stage, creativity can actually assist the memory process, since creativity requires focus and interaction. In the example I gave of our alphabet zoo, my son had to closely study the shape of the letters and create an association in his mind with an animal whose name began with the same sound before he could imagine a way to combine the two. You can challenge older students similarly. Many adults still whisper, "**K**ing **P**hillip **c**ame **o**ver **f**or **g**rape **s**oda" when trying to recall the categories of taxonomy in biology (**K**ingdom, **P**hylum, **C**lass, **O**rder, **F**amily, **G**enus, **S**pecies) or "**P**lease **e**xcuse **m**y **d**ear **A**unt **S**adie" (**P**arentheses, **E**xponents, **M**ultiply, **D**ivide, **A**dd, **S**ubtract) when solving complex math problems. Students might create mnemonic devices to help themselves remember the countries on a continent, the rivers of a region, or historical events or figures in chronological order. Or they might enjoy using stylized numbers to create a tool for remembering the features of insects, or memorizing the states and capitols or the elements of the periodic table to music or rhythm, whether one you learn or one you make up.



Far from being a "waste of time," anything your child does to engage and interact with the material will help them remember more easily and longer. Imagination is the only limit!

UNDERSTANDING



Though memorizing facts is the first step to learning, it's not enough simply to parrot information without understanding the concepts. The next step in learning is to grasp the ideas behind the facts.

At this phase you want to make sure students can explain the ideas or concepts. You might ask them to:

- **classify** examples and non-examples
- **compare** samples to find common characteristics
- **describe** traits or processes
- **discuss** the idea or concept
- **distinguish** elements
- **estimate** and predict
- **explain** what they remember
- **express** what they've learned in their own words
- **generalize** rules, events, or characteristics
- **give an example**
- **identify** elements and other examples that might be similar
- **locate** features
- **outline** events or processes
- **paraphrase** the important ideas in the lesson
- **predict** outcomes
- **recognize** pertinent elements and **tell** why they are important
- **report** on a portion of what they've learned
- **restate** a concept in their own words
- **select/pick/choose** samples
- **summarize** the basic points
- **translate** what was said into language they can understand

When these words are part of your child's assignment, you can know that the child is being challenged to truly understand a new concept.

Obviously it's important to understand lessons, but let me tell you a story that will illustrate clearly the difference between remembering and understanding—a story about the day our math teacher introduced the quadratic formula. We were assigned to memorize it, and I did, but I was still completely baffled. When I asked a classmate if he understood the lesson, he said, "Sure. 'A' is the first number by x^2, 'B' is whatever number is next to x, and 'C' is the one left over. Stick them in the formula and crunch the numbers." I knew that much, but *how* did the formula help us arrive at the solution? *Why* did it work? "I don't know, and I don't much care," he said. "Just plug and chug!" When I think of remembering facts without understanding them at all, this memory illustrates the futility. How long do you think the I would have remembered an equation I didn't understand? Even if I had managed to put the correct answers in the spaces provided to complete a homework assignment or pass a test, what would that data have meant to me? Exactly nothing. Fortunately during the next class period our teacher proved the equation, showing us how the elements of a quadratic equation twisted and simplified and balanced into a general formula. To this day I could give only the most basic generalization of the principles, but it was enough to allow me to understand and use that method.

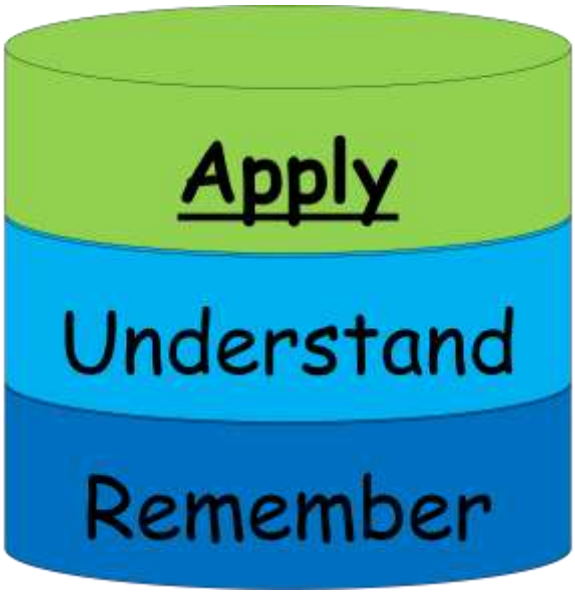
I have to wonder how many students memorize data that is complete gibberish to them. Remembering information is the first step in learning, but education would be an exercise in total frustration and confusion if we didn't grasp the underlying concepts!

You can spot gaps in your student's understanding by asking questions like:

- How would you summarize _____?
- Who do you think _____?
- What example could you give of _____?
- How would you say _____?
- Tell in your own words _____.
- How would you explain _____?
- What might happen next?

Because understanding is basically engraining new ideas into our minds, creativity and imagination are a natural part of the learning process at this phase. You may not feel the need to add any "extra" creative assignments, but you'll want to appreciate that when your student describes, paraphrases, translates, or predicts they are also being creative in a very practical sense.

APPLYING



We demonstrate our grasp of concepts by applying the new skills we've learned in a variety of situations. Repeated application results in mastery—that point at which we know automatically what to do and how to do it.

You can make sure your student is able to use information in new situations by asking them to:

- **change** elements of the original problem and observe the effect on the solution
- **choose** situations where the new information will be useful
- **complete** an exercise using the new skills
- **compute** answers
- **demonstrate** ways to use their new skills
- **discover** situations where the principles they've learned apply
- **dramatize** a situation to show their understanding
- **employ** new methods to solve a problem in a new and different way
- **illustrate** an example using their new understanding
- **interpret** what's going on and what must happen next
- **model** a new skill
- **modify** a problem to see if the principles they've learned still apply
- **operate** new equipment or **use** new tools independently
- **produce** an outcome using new skills
- **schedule** the steps that must come first, next, and last
- **show** the steps taken to find a solution
- **sketch** a storyboard to explain how things happen
- **solve** new problems using new tools and skills
- **use** new skills to meet a challenge or create a product
- **write** a description of the process in their own words

When these words appear in an assignment or a student is asked to perform these activities, the student is challenged to apply their new skills and build confidence in their use.

For many years my husband taught computer courses at one of the nation's premier two-year technical colleges. In the same town, a private university also offered a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. Though the four-year university would not accept transfer credits from the technical college, we noticed that many university students completed their bachelor's degree and then paid to take additional courses at the technical college. Why? Many reported that in four years at the private university they had never actually built a computer or set up a computer network. They understood computers in theory, but they had never actually applied their skills.

To make sure your student is able to apply what they've learned, you might ask questions like:

- How/why is _____ an example of _____?
- What would happen if _____?
- What can you use to show or explain _____?
- Can you group/sort by features such as _____?
- Which factors would you change if _____?
- How would you solve _____?

Creativity is inherent at this phase of learning! While it is possible to test a student's ability to apply their skills using standard fill-in-the-blank questions, it is also possible to remove predetermined boundaries and expectations and allow students to "play around" with ideas and their potential applications.

Modeling creativity at the application phase, German composer J. S. Bach wrote a series of two- and three-part "inventions"—unique tunes with their own musical merit—for his piano students rather than simply assigning endless repetitions of scales and arpeggios. These classic tunes provided the practice and discipline needed in a format that was infinitely more satisfying.

You have the same opportunity to model and encourage creativity during the application phase. You could ask your students to solve a page of sample math problems, or you might inspire creativity by asking them to invent a scenario and demonstrate how their new skill would be useful in finding a solution. You could hand them a pattern, recipe, or set of instructions, or you could give them a bit of artistic license to create something that bears their personal touch.

Creative license may not be appropriate the first time a student applies a new skill. It takes time to become adept at a new process, and there is value initially in simply following instructions until a certain level of proficiency is reached, but as students become more confident in their skills be sure not to mistake their efforts at creativity for "errors". Your child may simply be making the application of a new process their own.

Higher-Level Thinking

"Read the lesson. Answer the questions. Take the test."

Too many people think these three steps sum up the learning process when, in fact, they make up only half of a real education. The first three steps of learning introduce students to the tools for thinking. The next three steps teach them HOW to think—how to use their tools.

The next three steps are what we refer to as "higher-level thinking skills", and they are vital to the process of becoming truly educated.

Because so many homeschool parents (self included) are familiar with the idea of classical education, I feel it's important to point out again that Bloom's Taxonomy is a little different. Classical education recognizes similar levels of learning, but tends to focus on the basic levels while children are in grammar school. As the child grows, they progress to logic (reasoning) and rhetoric (expression). Logic and rhetoric tend to encompass the higher level thinking skills, and they're left for more advanced students. By contrast, Bloom's Taxonomy is an approach to teaching that encourages students of all ages to think at progressively higher levels about each new idea introduced.

I don't see these two theories as "either; or" but as "both; and."

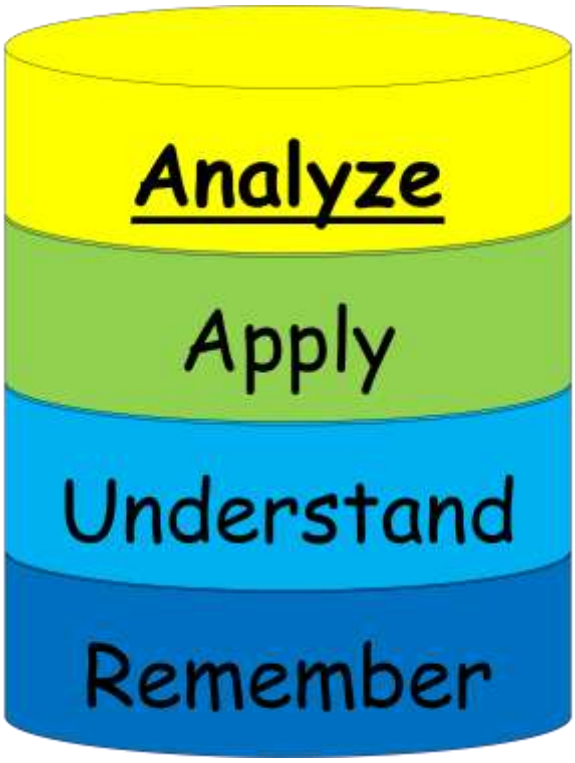
It is certainly true that most skills are new to younger students which will result in a great deal of memory work and explaining, while older students are more likely to have already accumulated a foundation of knowledge. A firm foundation enables mature students to progress more quickly to higher-level skills, but that is not to say that younger students can't be challenged to begin to think deeply, make connections across disciplines, and develop their powers of creativity and expression.

Learning is, ideally, a lifestyle. Even as we grow old our minds can remain fresh as we are continually introduced to new challenges and experiences.

Creativity is also a lifestyle—a perspective. Even very young children can be amazingly imaginative and insightful.

Don't wait until they are "older" to encourage creative expression, or you may find they've forgotten how to wonder, imagine, and play!

ANALYZING



The first step to thinking deeply is developing the ability to analyze information by breaking it into its component parts and sorting fact from theory.

We can help students distinguish the different elements of a matter to understand it better by challenging them to:

- **appraise** the merit or value of components
- **break down** the issue into smaller steps or principles
- **categorize** and **evaluate** the component parts
- **classify** elements as they relate to known examples
- **compare** the parts of the issue or compare the matter at hand to other samples
- **contrast** unique features
- **criticize** strengths and weaknesses of a statement
- **diagram** to show the relationship of parts to whole
- **differentiate** fact from fiction, logic from assumption
- **discriminate** between the parts
- **distinguish** elements with common features
- **examine** in detail
- **experiment** to test theories
- **identify** similarities and differences
- **infer** outcomes, but remain open to other possibilities and explanations
- **investigate** the source of ideas
- **outline** to show how the parts relate to the whole

- **point out** common features and features which are unique
- **question** everything (without being unnecessarily argumentative)
- **relate** the whole to the parts and the parts to the whole
- **separate** fact from theory, parts from whole
- **subdivide** a large challenge into smaller tasks
- **test** assumptions

I'm sure you've heard the old joke: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!

In order to analyze a challenge, we need to know how to take it apart so that we can address it one bit at a time. Analysis breaks overwhelming issues into manageable tasks.

This is a vital skill for managing progress and controlling quality. By way of illustration, you might be surprised to learn that only 8% of people who make New Year's resolutions are successful in achieving them. The overwhelming rate of failure may be explained, in part, by the fact that visualizing a goal is not the same as establishing a method for achieving it one step at a time. If I resolve to lose 40 pounds by next year, for example, I will not only need to break my goal down into monthly targets, but also identify the factors that contribute to reaching my goal: reducing calorie intake, reducing serving size, increasing nutritional quality, increasing exercise, and supporting a positive self-image. It would be helpful to know which of those factors will be of most value and how success in one area might impact progress in another area.

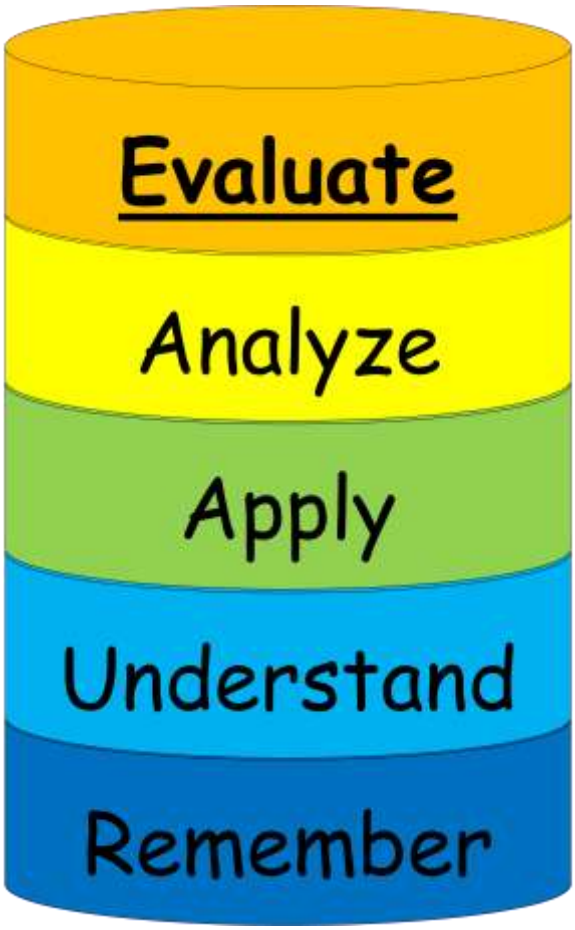
A student might employ similar skills in writing a research paper to avoid a frantic and futile eleventh-hour effort. Writing a lengthy research paper may seem overwhelming, but the job is much easier if we see it as separate tasks--deciding on a topic, making a trip to the library to overview availability of sources and possible discussion points, selecting and assessing the value of sources, appraising the value of direct quotes that illustrate desired points, drafting paragraphs to introduce and support each point, polishing the paper, and properly documenting the sources.

To help students develop analytical thinking skills, we might ask:

- What is the underlying theme or meaning of _____?
- How is _____ similar to or different from _____?
- Is the information based on fact or opinion?
- Can you explain what would have happened when _____?
- What do you think about _____?
- What conclusions can you draw?

At first glance, analysis may not seem to allow much room for creativity, but analysis is basically a problem-solving skill. When we analyze, we are learning to look at a challenge in new ways...and that is one of the definitions of creativity. Identifying the parts of a matter may be a rather factual process, but determining how the parts relate, explaining those relationships, envisioning an outcome, and devising ways to test theories or achieve solutions can provide a very practical realm for creative thinking.

EVALUATING



Since I used the writing of a research paper to illustrate a sometimes overwhelming process that can be analyzed and broken down into steps, let me continue using the same example as we discuss evaluation—developing the ability form value judgments, express opinions, and back our convictions up with compelling arguments.

Evaluation is what makes a research paper different from a researched report. Having taught high school English for many years, I am fairly certain that students are required to write research papers so that they can learn the higher-level thinking skill of evaluation, though we often do not explain that to them very well. The main goal of assigning a research paper is to challenge students to ask a question, break an issue into components and evaluate various viewpoints, then form a personal opinion and justify it with evidence.

We can help students develop and express informed opinions by challenging them to:

- **appraise** the merit or value of an opinion
- **argue** valid perspectives
- **assess** the quality of an argument
- **choose** a position
- **compare** viewpoints
- **conclude** and **establish** a position or conviction

- **consider** other viewpoints
- **contrast** opposing positions
- **critique** the value of various options
- **decide** what they believe
- **defend** their beliefs
- **evaluate** the strengths and weaknesses of an argument
- **interpret** data and its relevance
- **judge** what is true from what is convenient or circumstantial
- **justify** their opinions
- **prioritize** the issues to be considered
- **rate** the importance of factors
- **recommend** factors that others might consider
- **select** the most important priorities
- **summarize** general principles
- **support** their personal views
- **value** other viewpoints accurately
- **weigh** evidence

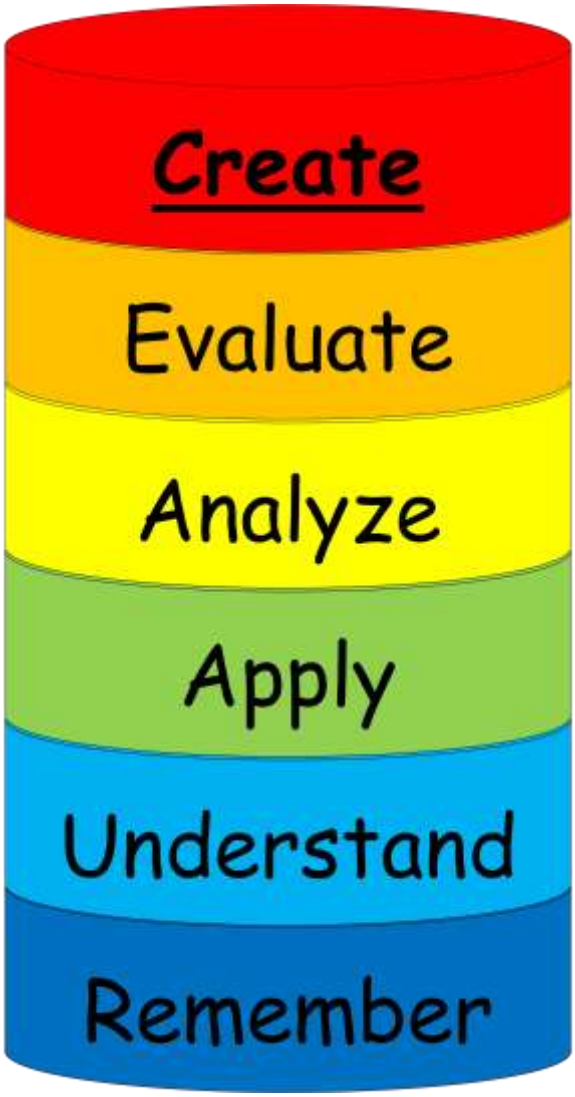
To help them in the process, we might ask questions such as:

- What would happen if _____?
- What is your opinion of _____?
- What shows you that _____ happened?
- How could _____ be improved?
- Using what you know, how would you explain _____?
- What evidence would support your view?
- Do you agree with the outcome?

I have heard many people describe research paper writing as the most boring of activities, but the almost limitless creativity of my students' minds was a source of great delight! From the topics they chose to investigate to the way they presented their findings and expressed their opinions, each student and each paper was entirely one-of-a-kind. Some took a hard-line, irrefutable approach. Others plied their readers with convincing evidence. Still others used humor to defuse potentially controversial arguments. Each applied their unique temperament, interests, and talents to forming and defending a viewpoint. It was beautiful.

We must remember that creativity is more than art, music, and dance. Creativity is the development and expression of meaningful new ideas. Certainly those new ideas could be artistic, musical, or theatrical. But creativity might also be a new way of organizing a closet or preparing a meal, a new way of approaching a problem, or a new understanding of an age-old question. The areas in which your child is most easily creative will depend on their interests, gifts, and talents.

CREATING



Creativity is the highest-level thinking skill. Are you surprised? To create is to synthesize facts from different fields of study in order to design new solutions, constructing new forms and ideas from diverse elements, creating new perspectives and better understanding.

We've been training our children to create all along. Now that they have a sound base of knowledge, we can help them express themselves with grace and confidence by challenging them to:

- **assemble**
- **combine**
- **compose**
- **construct**
- **create**
- **design**
- **develop**

- **devise**
- **formulate**
- **generate**
- **hypothesize**
- **imagine**
- **invent**
- **modify**
- **organize**
- **originate**
- **plan**
- **produce**
- **rearrange**
- **reconstruct**
- **reorganize**
- **revise**
- **rewrite**
- **summarize**
- **synthesize**
- **write**

Always before I've given ideas for *what* they might compose, *how* they should combine, *what* they could modify, organize, or write, but at this point they will begin to know. They will have their own ideas. From years of observation, you will also have an idea where your child's interests and talents lie.

If they need a nudge in the right direction, we might ask questions like:

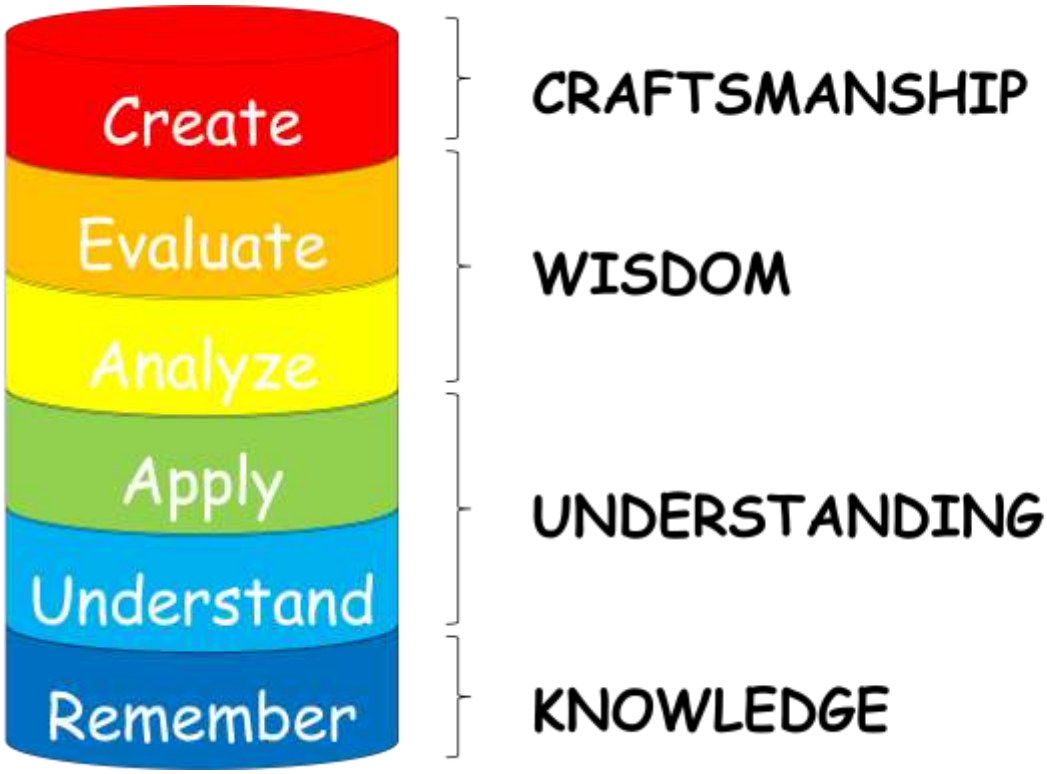
- What might be a solution to _____?
- Can you make a proposal that would _____?
- What theory can you come up with for _____?
- What might happen if _____?
- How many ways can you _____?
- How could you create/improve/develop _____?

Let them take it from there, and prepare to be amazed!

Summary

We refer to God as our Creator, and we are created in the likeness of our creative Father.

In Exodus 35:31, Moses introduces Bezalel the son of Uri as the chief builder of the tabernacle saying, "[God] has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship." If we were to compare wisdom, understanding, knowledge and craftsmanship with the levels of learning, it might look something like this:



We want our children to develop these same valued traits—a base of sound knowledge, thorough understanding, godly wisdom, and the skill of creative craftsmen. When these skills develop together, our children will grow into mature, confident, deep-thinking adults equipped for every good work they've been called to for God's glory.

Other Books in this Series

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Book 2 - How to Make Learning Meaningful, Memorable, and Fun!
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A hands-on, unit study-based history program to help families discover Texas, one adventure after another!

Other Books by this Author

More Precious Than Gold

The bullet that killed Eliza Gentry's fiancé shattered her dreams as well. Clinging to her battered faith, she heads west to escape her grief and runs headlong into the man who caused it.

Tall and headstrong, Eliza expects to remain an "unclaimed treasure." Devastated in the wake of the Civil War, she leaves her home in Texas and sets out for New Mexico's Sangre de Cristo mountains in search of peace and new purpose but discovers a wild western frontier where former enemies—Yankees and Rebels, Freedmen and Indians—square off in the quest for land and gold.

Eliza must confront her prejudices and fears, and Jacob Craig embodies that conflict. The mountain man wins her trust with his gentle strength, but he harbors a secret. As a Union sharp-shooter, he met her fiancé on the field of battle and cost him his life. Can she forgive him? To find peace and the future she yearns for, Eliza must first find in God a faith more precious than gold.

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