AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CREATIVITY -
IN - TEACHING FIFTH GRADE SOCIAL
STUDIES IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

ID 499

by
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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Creative teaching has as its task the guidance and the release of creative potential. A teacher is creative in the sense that he develops an atmosphere that is favorable to the creativity of others — an atmosphere in which every child's ideas are accepted. In other words, the creative teacher functions as a catalyst.\(^1\) It is not assumed, however, that teachers can be divided into two groups — the creative and the uncreative. Nor is it assumed that any one teacher will teach creatively all the time. It is felt that a teacher must also carefully determine the points at which he must operate for a time in a routine way.\(^2\) The more creative teacher can be described as valuing divergent thinking more than convergent thinking and an open-ended system more than a closed system.\(^3\) The point has been made that the more creative teacher also has a sense of security in uncertainty and a tolerance for ambiguity.\(^4\) Finally, a creative teacher has a subjective attitude toward the subject matter and is oriented to movement from the known to the unknown, thus emphasizing the formation of new ideas.\(^5\)
The importance of determining the extent to which creative teaching can be described rests on the value of creativity itself. This value is reflected by an abundant consensus on the need for creativity in education. This consensus may be due to the fact that society is facing new needs. In the attempt to face new needs comes a warning from an educational newsletter:

In today's world creativity is not just a nice thing to have. It is a grave necessity. Imitating the past is not good enough; only the creative society will survive.7

Emphasis on creativity as innovation and invention in our schools then is necessary because "we cannot predict what a person will need to know in the 21st century as well as in the next third of this century"8 and because it is recognized that "our very survival depends upon the quality of the creative imagination of our next generation."9

Recent recognition of the proposed need for creativity in education is illustrated by the contrast of past and present attitudes toward creativity and its encouragement. In the past, the general impression has been that the successful development of creative ability should concern itself with persons of unusual artistic, musical, or literary endowment. In the past, creativity has also been regarded as a spontaneous act with no consciously directed means for its development. However, creativity is now regarded as a goal of education.10 In the category of recent developments are specific admonishments as to the present state of education
since the recognition of the need for creativity. One such admonishment begins —

We need to take a fresh, inventive, creative look into the curricula of schools and colleges. It is clear that they are geared to "input," but not to "output." We still emphasize "the duplication of knowledge," but do little with creative explication, implication, and application. We need more learning for doing.11

This study is concerned with a possible discrepancy between fact and opinion in the area of creative teaching. Opinion, for the purpose of this study, is represented by the educational philosophies of many school systems which extol the virtues of creativity and stress the importance of creativity in teaching. Fact is approached through an attempt to measure the creative practices of teachers in a particular system. Fact, rephrased, asks — "To what extent do elementary teachers attempt to teach creatively?" This question, then, forms the core of the problem of this study.

The problem itself required an immediate synthesis of a definition of creativity. Creativity, which can be defined in many ways, is usually defined in terms of either a process, product, personality, or environmental condition.12 For the purposes of this study, however, emphasis is placed on creativity as a process and as an environmental condition. Whether or not a teacher employs approaches which are conducive to creativity and whether or not she establishes a climate or environment which aids this process are points of emphasis for this study. Naming the point of view taken is, however, not particularly definitive.
In order to be more definite, a number of basic assumptions were compiled:

1. It is assumed that creativity deals with newness in the sense of either a personal rediscovery of what has already been discovered or the production of something entirely new. This implies both the transmission and the transformation of knowledge.

2. Such concepts as curiosity, imagination, discovery, innovation, and invention are indicative of creativity, but cannot be equated with it. Creativity encompasses them all; it is not limited to a single function.

3. Creativity can not be copied.

4. Creativity refers to what is going on within the individual — his own way of thinking, feeling, and doing. As he devises ways of expressing ideas or feelings which to his knowledge have originated within his own thinking and are not forced by the environment, he is developing through the process of creativity. The creative process then is assumed to be essential to self-realization.

5. It is assumed that every individual possesses the ability to be creative. This ability, however, varies with individuals in regard to strength and/or area in which they are capable of expressing it.

6. It is also assumed that creativity can not be taught, but can be released and guided. No one person can tell another person how to be creative because the essence lies in one's own insight, understandings, and feelings.

7. The purpose of creative education, it is assumed then, is to guide creative processes which must be guided (encouraged, nurtured, allowed).
Limitations of the Study

The study has certain limitations. The decision was made, first of all, not to attempt to measure evidence of creative teaching in all areas of the curriculum. Such a task would be an impossible one to perform with any degree of accuracy or validity. The most feasible approach, it was felt, would be to concentrate on obtaining a measure for a number of teachers in one specific area of the curriculum. The area decided upon was social studies. The choice was largely due to the nature of social studies, since it is "an integration of subject matter and concept formulation which calls for a balance and synthesis between social and academic learning and between the immediate and the remote."\textsuperscript{22} Such an area should provide ample opportunity for creative teaching.\textsuperscript{23} The desire to have subjects as alike as possible without reference to individual differences in attitude and personality led to the choice of teachers in a specific grade level in a public school system. With the intention of including children's responses to questions concerning practices in the classroom, grade level five was chosen. Fifth grade children were thought to be capable of understanding and answering any question included in the interview, if each question were carefully analyzed as to vocabulary level and possible ambiguity. Grade six could have been chosen for the same reason, but was not, due to a preference for and interest in the lower grade by the author, who was also responsible for interviewing.
CHAPTER II

Review of Related Research

Over the past few years there have been many studies of creativity. All of these have been concerned with the nature of the concept of creativity, the identification of creative individuals, or some specific classroom applications of creativity. The data reported reflect a specific instructional setting, or the findings are of a theoretical rather than a practical nature. Few of these publications report practices relative to creativity which are representative of teaching in elementary schools. There are, however, seven studies reported in the past ten years which appear to be pertinent to the determination of creative teaching.

Of these seven studies three were found to have a direct relationship to the problem in this study. The most recent of the three, "A Survey of Beliefs and Practices Relative to Creativity," by William C. Wolf Jr. was published in March, 1964 in the Journal of Educational Research. The purpose of this study was, first of all, to find out how classroom teachers viewed the concept of creativity. Wolf's next concern was that of making a survey of learning experiences employed by teachers under the guise of creativity.
This study did not include the categorization of classroom teachers as creative, less creative, or uncreative, nor was the study interested in a particular area of the curriculum. In a six state area, teachers were asked by a mailed questionnaire, "what do you think 'creativity' is?" and "what do you do in your classroom which you consider to be creative?". According to the data collected in the study: almost half of the responding teachers conceived of creativity as a personal characteristic; one-fourth related it to a product or end; while one-fifth identified the concept as a process. The data, however, revealed a discrepancy in the teachers' statements. Manifestations of creativity in the classroom did not seem consistent with the teachers' view of creativity. Inconsistencies of this nature were blamed on vaguely conceived efforts to make provision for "a nebulous concept" in the school curriculum. The data also reported a widespread acceptance of creativity which Wolfe regarded as remarkable because the relationship between creativity and elementary education is so very recent. From the data, Wolfe constructed a response pattern for the mythical "typical teacher". This teacher — 1) conceived of creativity as a personal characteristic, 2) described creative learning experiences which pervade the entire elementary school curriculum, and 3) employed these experiences to expedite specific learning and/or instruction in the classroom. Wolfe concluded that:
Creative learning experiences are extensively utilized in today's elementary school; many teachers adhere to similar beliefs and practices relative to creativity consistently in the classroom.

The next oldest of the three studies, "A Guide to Principles of Creativity-in-Teaching with Suggestions for Use in Elementary Social Studies" by Edward F. Stone was completed in 1961. Stone compiled, from a review of literature, fifteen principles of creativity in teaching. Using these principles he built into his study seven illustrations of creative experiences in social studies which he obtained from the public schools of Great Neck, New York. The seven teachers, K-6, who provided the illustrations were evaluated prior to the study as professional and creative people. These were judged according to criteria established by the investigation and supported by a jury of school personnel. Stone concluded by means of the illustrations that one could show a valid relationship to the general principles through their successful application in actual classroom situations. The degree of relationship, however, was not mentioned. Stone then wrote a guide for elementary teachers which he hoped would stimulate teachers to work more creatively in the classroom. The guide also included:

...a summation of the theory of the creative process translated into a functionally suggestive record of certain experiences that have been offered children with successful results.

The purpose of the third study is apparent from its
title, "Analysis of Observed Traits of Teachers Rated Superior in Demonstrating Creativeness in Teaching". The study, by Jesse A. Bond, was reviewed in the September, 1959 issue of the Journal of Educational Research. Bond's conclusions have been the most comprehensive of the three studies. Bond found a close relationship between high mean scores in creativeness and general superiority in teaching. He concluded that creativeness is essential as a contributing factor to superior teaching success and that it is proportionally lacking with teachers of inferior ability.26 Bond also came to the conclusion that:

It is highly suggestive that teachers lacking strength in planning and teaching creatively take refuge in working with supplies and equipment and in testing pupils on what they presumably have learned on their own.27

The limited findings of a fourth study, one by Carol F. Marshall, has made it difficult to equate the study, "Classroom Perceptions of Highly Creative and Less Creative Teachers in the Elementary School," with the three studies already described. However, it is of significance to the present study because of the relationship found between responses of highly creative and less creative teachers. Marshall found that highly creative teachers tended to mention such phrases as "orderly freedom", "busy noises", and "guided from the background"; less creative teachers suggested "follows directions," "sits in seat", and "teacher guided". No attempt was made in the study, however, to explain how either the "highly creative" or "less creative"
teachers were chosen or categorized. 28

The three remaining studies contain findings which may be regarded as pertinent considerations for teaching creatively. Studies by three authors, Frank E. May, Janet M. Gilbert, and Donald J. Hadley, produced findings on the relationship between intelligence and creativity while they were investigating related problems. The data used in Gilbert's study, supported the previous findings of Getzels, Jackson, and Torrance who found that intelligence tests were not satisfactory instruments for identifying creative students. Gilbert also hypothesized that on standardized measures of achievement, the creative student would do as well or better than less creative students, but that he would not fair as well on teacher marks. 29 This hypothesis was supported. May's findings from a study of the creative thinking of seventh graders agreed with those of Gilbert. May found that with populations that are fairly homogeneous with respect to intelligence, I.Q. scores are probably poor predictors of creative-thinking ability. Correlations between I.Q. scores and creative thinking scores in the study ranged between .08 and .30 with most of the correlations approaching zero. 30 Hadley, in a study of the relationship between creativity and anxiety, discovered additional support for the findings of both May and Gilbert. In his study, Hadley found that a group of children who are low in anxiety and high in intelligence, were not similarly high in creativity. According to the data those with very low
anxiety exhibit a moderate amount of creativity; those with a slightly higher amount of anxiety exhibit the highest amount of creativity; and those with increasingly higher anxiety exhibit increasingly less creativity. Hadley also found strong evidence that:

No matter how much anxiety a child may feel, the introduction of some common behaviors of teachers which research indicates induce anxiety will curtail creative production.31

A major accomplishment of publications on creativity has been the labeling of sources of discouragement to creativity. One such source of discouragement to creativity is said to be the school itself. Data gathered by Spindler, Getzels and Jackson, Torrance, Coleman and Henry suggest that the student is being dominated by the school and instead of having his creativity nourished, his thinking, feeling and reacting are restricted. In other words, he is being stifled.32 Two factors encountered in the school are said to be responsible for the stifling. The first factor is the work-play dichotomy. Day states that teachers suppose that there should be no playing around in work and so they do not give children many opportunities to learn creatively because "children enjoy creative experiences and their pleasure makes teachers uneasy."33 The second factor is that of sanctions against questioning and exploration. According to the data gathered, teachers do recognize that students need to ask questions and make inquiries about their environment, however, children who do so are "often
brutally squelched" in order to "put the curious child in his place." According to Shumsky, it is the intent of most teachers to "present a stereotyped, sugar-coated portrait and to avoid struggle and controversy." Shumsky indicates that there are three types of teachers — the repetitive teacher, the main-idea teacher, and the creative teacher. Miel poses this question, "Do we really have to stand by and watch the training of mediocrity?"

A second source of discouragement is said to be society, itself. A major obstacle is society's success orientation. The point is made that individuals are prepared by military and civilian education only for success, not for coping with frustration and failure. The inhibiting effect of this tendency "is seen again and again in the individual testing of children on tasks of creative thinking." Another factor, although still dealing with success, has to do with the current pressures of society on schools to maintain high academic standards. Barron indicates that the response by school people to this pressure has taken the form of increased pressures on children for rote memorization of facts.

Another factor within society which exerts pressure on the student is his peer group. Peer groups undoubtedly value conformity, and equate divergency with abnormality. In doing so, they exert relentless pressure on one another to rid themselves of any divergent characteristics. Yet one of the most significant personal characteristics of
especially creative children seems to be the courage to step beyond the established bounds. Thus they have to fight the peer group and often do so without teacher support. It would seem, then, that the teacher who attempts to teach creatively must do battle with society in general, the child's peer group, and in some cases the school, itself, and the teachers therein.

In the opposite vein, points of encouragement have also been shown by research. Lists have been compiled describing what must be done by a teacher to increase the creativity in his teaching. These are not stand-pat formulas, nor are they recommendations for the use of any certain materials. Particular materials cannot be recommended because it has been concluded that too little is yet known about the effects of various instructional media on creativity. The creative teacher approaches knowledge with the question — "what does the subject matter mean to me as a person?" Taylor summarizes the present state of affairs by saying:

It may be more effective at the present stage to develop materials designed to remove hindrances and to untrain for non-creativity than to directly train for creativity.

In addition, Torrance has emphasized the importance of learning how to reward creative behavior if children are to think creatively. and, according to Dale, the ultimate aim of education should be to try to make students alike enough so that they can communicate with each other, yet different
enough so that they will have something worth communicating.\textsuperscript{46}

The issue, then, has been evaluated. The barriers have been identified. A philosophy of need has been formulated. Suggestions have been made to implement or produce creative experiences. What seemingly remains to be accomplished is to encourage the thoughtful pursuit of the process and to perhaps instill, most certainly to test, and ultimately to uphold belief in the philosophy of need already formulated.
CHAPTER III

Collection and Evaluation of Data

The processes used in collecting and evaluating data in the present study were very simple. They can be described in order of the topics of selection, population, instrumentation, and evaluation of responses, which immediately follow.

Selection: A letter was sent to each of the fifty-five fifth grade teachers in the Metropolitan Schools of Muncie, Indiana. This letter contained an explanation of the purpose of the study and asked for their cooperation. (See appendix) Enclosed in each letter was a stamped, self-addressed reply card. On the reply card the receiver was to indicate his willingness to participate. If the teacher wished to participate, he consented to a ten-minute interview. The teacher selected three of his students for individual interviews of approximately equal length. The letter requested that the teacher select a student who, in his estimation, was a "good student", another whom he felt liked social studies, and a third student who was a "poor student" in his estimation. The students were chosen in this manner in order to obtain a cross-section of the students in each individual classroom. If a teacher returned a positive
reply he was contacted so that a time and date for the interviews could be set.

Population: By the end of the interviewing period which extended from January 23, 1968 through February 26, 1968, forty teachers and one hundred forty students had been interviewed. Due to a discrepancy in the format of the children's interview in the first three sets, where a set consisted of one teacher and three of his students, these sets were discounted in the evaluation of the study. The sample used in this study was thus reduced to 37 teachers and 111 students for purposes of evaluation. This sample represented twenty of the twenty-two elementary schools in the Muncie Metropolitan Schools.

Interviews were conducted with each teacher and each student in the school building. Such areas as a teachers' lounge, the nurse's clinic, or the music room were used for interviewing. Any room where it was felt that the child would receive a minimum of distracting influence was utilized. The length of an interview varied from seven to twelve minutes.

Of the 111 students, 60 were boys and 51 were girls. Of the 37 "good students", 12 were boys and 25 were girls; of the favorite subject group, 24 were male and 13 were female; of the poor students 24 were boys and 13 were girls. The number of girls exceeded the number of boys only in the category of the "good student".

Instrumentation: The instrument used with teachers was a
one-page interview guide. A two-page interview outline was used with the children. The items were a compilation of those suggested for use by various authors, since no single available instrument seemed to be valid for use with children in the measurement of their perception of classroom practices and atmosphere. Items on the teacher-interview included the following topics: (1) method used in teaching social studies; (2) response of students to presentation of subject matter; (3) nature and number of social studies projects for student participation during the school year; (4) employment of and success with the problem-solving approach; (5) willingness to attempt "unusual" activities about which they might feel "insecure" in terms of outcome; (6) excursions or field trips taken by the class during the year; (7) role playing and dramatization used in social studies; (8) use of study guides by the teacher; and (9) reaction to a child who is "individualistic and non-conforming". Items on the student-interview were related to the following topics: (1) freedom to disagree; (2) freedom to handle materials in the classroom; (3) student-centered or teacher-centered classroom; (4) strength of impression of what is being studied; (5) response to the presentation of subject matter; (6) group work; (7) view of society; (6) divergent thinking; and (9) construction in the classroom.

Evaluation of responses: In the evaluation of each questionnaire the raw score assigned to each teacher was determined by an equivalent to the number of positive responses he made on nine of eleven items included in the
teacher's interview. A possible range was from 0 to 9 with a mean of 4.5. Two items included in the interview produced no variance in teacher response. The score assigned to each student was also determined by an equivalent to the number of positive responses on nine separate items.

A Pearson Product-Moment (r) with .05 level of confidence was then used to determine three separate correlations: (1) the raw scores of the "good student" with the raw score of the teacher; (2) the raw score of the "favorite subject student" with the raw score of the teacher; (3) the raw score of the "poor student" with the raw score of the teacher. Individual items were examined for significant response patterns. Finally, a composite score was obtained for each teacher by adding the teacher's raw score to one-third of the scores for each set of three students interviewed per teacher.
CHAPTER IV

Findings

The computation of the Pearson (r) for each of the three groups of students with their teachers revealed the following correlations: (1) \( r = 0.55 \) when the raw scores of the "good students" were correlated with the raw scores obtained for the teachers; (2) \( r = 0.45 \) when the raw scores of the "favorite subject students" were correlated with the raw scores obtained for the teachers; (3) \( r = 0.33 \) when the raw scores of the "poor students" were correlated with the raw scores obtained for the teachers. All three coefficients were found to be significant at the .05 level.

Twenty-six of the thirty-seven teachers, or seventy per cent, reported the use of not one, but a combination of methods in teaching social studies. The remaining eleven teachers, or thirty per cent, reported the use of one method, the unit, in teaching social studies. On an item used to measure teacher impression of student attitude toward social studies fourteen, or thirty-eight per cent, did detect an atmosphere of "suspension" or one in which individuals were "completely absorbed" in their social studies work. Twenty-three, or sixty-two per cent, of the thirty-seven teachers, however, felt that their students were "rarely or never
absorbed" in their social studies work. The next item in
the interview, concerned with the use of social studies
projects, yielded twenty-three positive responses, or about
sixty-two per cent of the total, and fourteen, or thirty-
eight per cent, negative responses. In the case of the
"absorption" item, however, fourteen made a positive
response; twenty-three, a negative one. Nine or about twenty-
four per cent of the thirty-seven teachers reported employing
the problem solving approach in the social studies classroom.
All indicated a feeling of a "moderate degree of success."
The remaining twenty-eight or seventy-six per cent of the
teachers did not employ this approach. Ten or twenty-seven
per cent of the teachers reported attempting activities in
the classroom which they considered unusual but about which
they felt insecure in terms of the outcome. The remaining
twenty-seven or seventy-three per cent of the teachers
reported that they had not attempted an activity which they
would consider unusual and could not recall feeling insecure
about the outcome of activities in their classroom. Twelve
or thirty-two per cent of the teachers had made excursions
with their class this school year; the remaining twenty-five
or sixty-eight per cent of the teachers had not done so.
Twenty-three or sixty-two per cent of the teachers reported
the use of role-playing or dramatization in social studies;
the remaining fourteen or thirty-eight per cent, however,
reported that they did not employ either activity in the
area of social studies. Eleven or thirty per cent of the
teachers reported that they made extensive use of teachers' study guides; sixteen or forty-three per cent of the teachers reported "reading and using suggestions from the study guides"; the remaining ten or approximately twenty-seven per cent reported making little use of study guides at all. On the following item, twenty-four or sixty-five per cent had a positive attitude toward a child who could be described as "individualistic and nonconforming"; the remaining thirteen or thirty-five per cent of the teachers reported that they "dislike" or "feel threatened" by such a child.

In order for a teacher to have an entirely positive score on all items he should: (a) use a combination of methods in teaching social studies; (b) be able to detect an atmosphere of "suspension on the part of students or of individuals being completely absorbed in their social studies work at times; (c) use projects in his social studies classroom; (d) employ the problem solving approach to social studies whenever possible; (e) attempt activities in the classroom which he considered unusual and about which he may feel insecure in terms of outcome; (f) use field trips as a learning activity; (g) employ role playing or dramatization in the social studies class when they were considered appropriate; (h) read and use suggestions from study guides; (i) have a positive attitude toward the "individualistic and non-conforming" child.

**Student Interview:** Ninety-nine students or eighty-nine per cent of the students who were interviewed gave full
descriptions of their present social studies work; twelve students or eleven percent were not able to recall what they were studying in social studies at the time of the interview. Light of the twelve were "poor students", three were "favorite subject students"; and one was categorized as a "good student". On the second item concerning the student's enthusiasm for social studies, sixty-seven or sixty percent of the students said that they did get "excited" about what they studied in social studies, the remaining forty percent or forty-four students said they had "never" been excited about social studies during this school year. Item numbers three and four on the interview were questions used in an attempt to find whether students are encouraged divergently. On the third item, fifty-five students, fifty-one percent, made responses which were indicative of divergent thinking; while fifty-four students, forty-nine percent of the students made responses indicative of convergent rather than divergent thinking. On the fourth item concerning the establishment of a friendship in a foreign land fourteen or thirteen percent of the students made responses which seemed to show convergent thinking; while ninety-seven students, eighty-seven percent, made responses which indicated more nearly convergent thinking. Thirty-six or thirty-two percent of the students responded affirmatively to "making or building something" for their social studies during this school year. The remaining seventy-five or sixty-eight percent made negative responses. Ninety-seven or
eighty-seven percent reportedly felt free to disagree with classmates over topics under discussion in social studies. The remaining fourteen students or twelve percent of the total did not feel such a freedom. Fifty-seven students or fifty-one percent reported that they felt free to explore and experiment with things in the classroom; however, fifty-four students or forty-nine percent, did not feel this freedom. Forty-four students or about forty percent said they did work in small groups in social studies and enjoyed group work. Sixty-seven students or sixty percent, said that they did not work in small groups in social studies, but that they did enjoy group work. On the final item in the student interview, seventy-six students or approximately sixty-nine percent viewed their classroom as being student-centered. The remaining thirty-five students, thirty-one percent indicated that they thought their classroom was teacher-centered.

In addition to the information gained on each of the nine items, the data revealed that students perceived some individuals as "helpful" and "encouraging." About thirty-one percent of the students attributed the role of the most helpful person to a friend; sixty-eight percent to the teacher; less than one percent to "myself"; and one percent considered "no one" as most helpful. In the latter case, that of the most encouraging figure, forty percent of the students attributed this role to the teacher; twenty-three percent to a friend; and thirty-seven percent considered "myself" or "no one" as most encouraging.
**Composite Scores:** Seventeen of the thirty-seven teachers or forty-six percent received composite scores above the mean of 9.8 while twenty of the thirty-seven teachers or fifty-four percent, received a composite score below the mean. The distribution of the scores indicated one very creative teacher, nine moderately creative teachers, twelve less creative teachers, and fifteen who used very little creativity in the teaching of social studies as evidenced by their composite score. No teacher was found to be completely lacking in creativity since the lowest composite score was 5.67.
CHAPTER V

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to investigate the question -- Do elementary teachers attempt to teach creatively? If so, to what extent? The area in which the investigation was carried out was fifth-grade social studies. Individual interviews were conducted with thirty-seven fifth grade teachers of the Muncie Metropolitan Schools and with three students from each of their classrooms. Teachers were asked to choose one student whom they perceived as a "good student", one student who, it was felt "liked social studies", and one whom they felt was a "poor student." At the end of the interviewing period an evaluation was made of the responses to the questionnaires from thirty-seven teachers and one hundred eleven students. Calculation of the Pearson (r) revealed correlations between the teacher scores and each group of students which were significant at the .05 level. On the item analysis of the teacher interviews, four of nine practices regarded as indicative of creativity in teaching were not employed by a majority of the teachers. Twenty-three of the thirty-seven teachers felt that they could not detect an atmosphere of "suspension" indicative of who were completely absorbed
in their social studies work. Twenty-eight of the thirty-seven teachers admittedly did not use the problem solving approach in the social studies class. Twenty-seven of the thirty-seven teachers had not attempted anything which they considered unusual or in which they were unsure of the outcome. Twenty-five of the thirty-seven teachers, for whatever reason, have not made an excursion with their class this year.

The following conclusions seem to be justifiable from the data obtained in this study: (a) the classroom atmosphere in social studies in a large number of cases could be termed "inadequate"; (b) there is an infrequent use of problem solving in social studies, the use of which is advocated for other subject areas; (c) practices of teachers lean toward the conventional and teachers seem reluctant to attempt anything which they might consider unusual. Teachers seemingly desire to feel secure in their teaching and are reluctant to try methods about which they might feel insecure or unsure; (d) a majority of the teachers in this study felt that the effort of making arrangements for a field trip are greater than the advantages of an excursion.

It was concluded from the item analysis of the student interviews that according to the students interviewed: (a) Students do not receive a great deal of encouragement to apply divergent thinking to social studies problems; (b) Despite the fact that students enjoy group work in social studies, group work is not employed by teachers; (c)
Industrial arts, which involves construction activities, is a minimal portion of the social studies program.

Do teachers attempt to teach creatively in the elementary classroom, as indicated by their teaching in social studies? It would seem wise to conclude from the scores that the problem can not be answered "yes" or "no". No teacher was found to be completely lacking in the ability to teach creatively. All of the teachers with the exception of one had at least two areas, however, in which definite change could be made in order to improve their standing on a creativity scale. The act of teaching creatively, then, can be put on a continuum from "highly creative" to extremely low in creativity, or "uncreative", with most teaching falling somewhere in between. The greatest number of teachers were found slightly below the mean.

Suggestions for Further Research

A number of interesting questions and points for future exploration were encountered during the collection of data for the study. Some of these were as follows:

1. what is the influence of race and socio-economic level on individual creativity? Is one race or socio-economic level more likely to engage in creative activities than another race or socio-economic level?

2. what can be done to emphasize the creative process instead of only the end product so that students
will receive a more accurate and direct picture of the total process?

3. What are the challenges in creativity? How much emphasis should be placed on determining the instructional media that would be most effective in putting across the process?

4. Will students tend to be more flexible, imaginative, and creative if they are exposed to a wider variety of instructional materials?

5. Is an open system necessarily conducive to creative thinking? What effect does an open system have on divergent thinking?

6. How can professional people adapt the processes to increase divergent thinking to the elementary classroom?

7. How successful are creativity workshops in improving a teacher's ability to teach creatively as measured by increase in number of creative practices before and after the workshop?

8. To what extent do the findings of studies with essentially the same format, but different items on interviews or questionnaires, differ from one another? For example, if the questionnaires in the present study consisted only of the very direct twenty ideas compiled by Torrance, would the conclusions be the same as were drawn in the present study?
With so many unanswered questions and so much promise of future development and need, the field of creativity has become a fascinating one for persons in a wide variety of professions.
FOOTNOTES


4Miel, p. 184.


8Ibid.


15Torrance, p. 4.


17Miel, p. 61.

19 Ibid., p. 501.

20 Ibid.


22 Shumsky, p. 206.

23 Ibid.


27 Ibid., p. 6.


33 Ibid.

34 Taylor, p. 98.
35Shumsky, p. 49.
36Ibid., p. 55.
37Kiel, p. 160.
40Ibid., p. 318.
41Taylor, p. 99.
42Torrance, p. 17.
43Shumsky, p. 47.
44Calvin W. Taylor, Possible Positive and Negative Effects of Instructional Media on Creativity (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1960), p. 1.
45Torrance, p. 16.
46Dale, p. 3.
APPENDIX
evaluation of the creativeness (according to a particular list of factors) of the three students interviewed and his/her own description of his/her own particular approach to social studies. All of the teachers will be asked the same questions. The interview should last from five to ten minutes.

Use of Information: (1) The purpose of this study is not to make judgments as to good or bad teaching in social studies. Its purpose is to determine the prevalence of certain factors in social studies teaching that receive the label "creative". (2) The names of teachers and students will not appear anywhere in the report. The results of the study are to be tabulated in a chi square table which of course presumes anonymity.

Please notice at this time the enclosed card. After marking it appropriately please drop it in a mailbox by January 20, 1968. Reply must be immediate!

Once again, your cooperation will be greatly appreciated. Please do not forget your signature on the enclosed postcard.

Sincerely,
The method you use in teaching fifth grade social studies can be best described as which of the following:

a. unit
b. project
c. socialized
d. not any one method, but a combination of methods
e. problem solving

(If you use the unit approach) Do you feel obligated to include every subject area in the unit?

Do you ever detect an atmosphere of "suspension" or individuals being completely absorbed in their social studies work? Explain--specific examples. Could you please describe the social studies projects in which your class has engaged?

How would you describe the success you have had in employing the problem solving approach?

Do you ever attempt activities in your classroom which you consider unusual and about which you, in terms of outcome feel insecure?

Can you tell me about an excursion your class has made this year? About any role playing or dramatization they have engaged in?

In what capacity have you used study guides?

Classify each of the students being interviewed on a scale of 1-4 (one is the highest rating indicating possession of this characteristic to a great degree):

a. verbal facility
b. verbal fluency
c. flexibility
d. originality--produces unique and workable ideas when presented with new or routine problems

What is your reaction to a child who can be described as: quiescent, withdrawn, individualistic, non-conforming? Are any of the three children interviewed to be described as this way?
Student Perception of their treatment

Do people disagree with you and tell you that you are wrong in class?  
- yes - no

Are you wrong according to others very often?  
- yes - no

When you don’t understand something does someone try to help you understand?  
- yes - no  If yes, who?

When you are working on something that goes wrong are you encouraged by someone to try again?  
- yes - no  If yes, who?

Do you feel free to explore and experiment with things on your own in the classroom this year?  
- yes - no  (Such as research on your own)

What do you have in the classroom that you can experiment with or handle?

Are you given instructions to follow all the time or are you allowed to decide for yourself what you would like to do something?

Do you like to find different ways of doing things?  
- yes - no

Are you encouraged to ask questions in class?  
- yes - no

Do your classmates ask a lot of questions in class? Does anyone?  
- yes - no  - yes - no

Do you and your classmates believe everything you see in your book?  
- yes - no

Does your teacher believe everything she sees in the textbook?  
- yes - no

Can you tell others how you think or feel about something in class?  
- yes - no

When you and your classmates have a problem to solve do you decide what to do yourselves or does your teacher decide for you?  
- students - teacher
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