

## From the author

I have always thought of creativity as a journey, and of the creative individual as an explorer. The great film director Federico Fellini used to say that you always need an excuse to be creative. My own excuse to set off on a creativity journey is, quite simply, that I owe it to my students and, ultimately, to myself. Because I love teaching, finding a creative voice is the only way I know to avoid getting stuck in a rut.

Creativity is a key that will open many doors. It can trigger many changes for the better in a vast array of human endeavours. Teaching included. And yet it has always puzzled me that people rarely think of teachers as creative professionals. Architects? Yes. Musicians? Yes. Painters? Writers? Fashion designers? Yes. But teachers? You must be joking.

And yet creativity is, in my view, any teacher's bread and butter. We live in a culture that doesn't encourage us to be creative unless there's a chance we are going to strike it big with a commercial 'hit'. Creativity, like so much else in our world, has been co-opted into consumerism and its worth calculated by how much money it generates.

The teaching world is no exception: the big pull is towards standardisation, exams, regimented syllabi, a senseless 'don't rock the boat' attitude – intellectual shortsight that will do nobody a favour. The Victorian art critic John Ruskin, when asked why he was teaching factory workers to draw, said: 'I'm not teaching them to draw, I'm teaching them to see.'

Isn't learning a language, too, a way of learning to see anew? I would venture to say that enhanced seeing and feeling are the real reasons to create, whether it is an exercise, a song, a haiku, or a brand new thought.

I wrote *Being Creative* because I am convinced that creativity, far from being a magic wand, can bring changes for the better in our classrooms and we ourselves can *make* these changes happen. Think how much better off we would be if public education opened itself more to creative collaboration with the students.

Creativity is not an optional extra – as I see it, it is the foundation to base our practice upon.

Happy reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Char". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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