Viewing Guide

TED Talks: “Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity”

Video Link:
http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html
Viewing Guide for TED Talks – Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity”

Speaker Biography: “Sir Ken Robinson, PhD is an internationally recognized leader in the development of education, creativity and innovation. He is also one of the world’s leading speakers with a profound impact on audiences everywhere. The videos of his famous 2006 and 2010 talks to the prestigious TED Conference have been seen by an estimated 200 million people in over 150 countries.” (from Robinson’s website)

1. Sir Kenneth Robinson starts his speech with humor. What hooks the listener almost immediately? Are his techniques effective?

2. Robinson lists three themes in the first several minutes. Provide the details that he gives to explain why these three themes are so important:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of Human Creativity</th>
<th>Can’t predict the future</th>
<th>Children’s’ capacity for creativity</th>
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3. What is the main idea (argument), or major claim, of Robinson’s talk? Is his argument coming from an ethical, logical or emotional perspective or a combination of persuasive appeals? Give examples.
4. The examples of the little girl who was drawing God and of his son’s Nativity play both show evidence of how children will take a risk or propose solutions even if it means changing an established order. Provide an example of when you took a creative risk, expressed your talents or changed an established order of something. How did your audience react? Were your ideas embraced or misunderstood? Would you do it again? Why or why not?

5. When Robinson moved to the US, what did he notice about the American educational system that mirrors the educational systems of the rest of the world?

6. What interesting metaphor does Robinson create about university professors? Express this response with an image or drawing.

7. Robinson provides some history of modern education to support his argument that the system has to change.
   A. Write a detailed one-sentence summary that encapsulates this information.
   B. What does the modern education system do to creative and talented people? Agree or disagree with Robinson and provide evidence for your answer.

8. Robinson proposes to rethink the whole system of education because changes in population, technology and degree earners mean that academic degrees do not mean what they used to mean. Robinson says, “… it indicates the whole structure of education is shifting beneath our feet. We need to radically rethink our view of intelligence.”
   A. What are the three things we know about intelligence according to Robinson?
   B. How does he define creativity? Defend, challenge or qualify Robinson’s definition of creativity.

9. Relate some of the details of choreographer Gillian Lynne’s story. Why does Lynne’s story fit with Robinson’s overall message?

10. What does Robinson want viewers to do or think because of his talk?
Extension Activity: Taking up Robinson’s Challenge

View this image of Bloom’s Learning Taxonomy that organizes Web 2.0 Apps according to their higher order thinking strategy. Click on the link for the interactive version as it takes you directly to the [website](#) for these Apps.

Task: Using one of these Apps or another of your own choosing, make a proposal statement in pictures, images or words that defines what you think the modern American school should look like. How much emphasis should be given to fostering talents and creativity? How important are the traditional concepts of academic subjects and academic achievement?
Answers to the Viewing Guide for TED Talks – Ken Robinson says schools kill creativity

1. Robinson has the distinct honor of having the most viewed and downloaded TED Talk of all time. Unlike many speakers, he does not move around the stage nor does he have an engaging multimedia presentation to support his speech. (He had polio as a child.) His success is due to his delivery- humor and storytelling elements. From the beginning, his self-deprecating humor, pacing, use of questioning and engaging details keep the listener interested. For more information on what makes good digital storytelling, the University of Houston has created a website called “The Seven Elements of Storytelling.” Robinson’s speech includes a distinct point of view, dramatic questions, emotional content, a unique voice, economy and pacing. Students will benefit with the use of Closed Captions available on the website version of the TED Talk. In addition, an interactive transcript is available below the TED Talk. Teachers may want to print out the transcript for absent students, those without access to technology or those who need additional help.

2.

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<tr>
<td>• Variety</td>
<td>• Educators must educate students for an unknown, unpredictable and evolving future</td>
<td>• Children have to be encouraged to find their talents so that they can dedicate themselves to them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Range</td>
<td>• Most people are fascinated with education- next to religion and money, it is a common value/concern</td>
<td>• Robinson is concerned that worldwide education models educate children out of their talents and creativity because of an archaic model built on getting kids into college. Children grow out of their creativity.</td>
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(Robinson cited examples of some of the speakers that had previously spoken and a musician who had performed the night before. He provides numerous examples of creative people in his speech and provides reaction to their creativity- Shakespeare, his son, the drawing girl, Gillian Lynne)
3. Robinson believes creativity is as important as literacy and that we (educators, educational systems, audience members and viewers) should treat it as such. Robinson’s argument appeals persuasively to ethos as he proposes that it is morally right to find each child’s talent and foster creativity. His appeal is also emotional (pathos) because he uses specific examples like that of his son and a famous choreographer. The audience connects because most people probably relate to the creative and humorous things children say as they try to figure out how things work (“knowing/ seeing God, for example). In addition, Robinson is a master at pacing which provides emotional conflict as he doles out details and connects them to his argument. Robinson alludes to logic (logos) as he provides a historical and factual overview of modern education to argue that it is an outdated model. His use of dramatic questions as transitions also appeal to the audience’s sense of ethics (Shakespeare example) as he introduces the idea that highly creative and talented people are often misunderstood.

4. This question asks students to make a personal connection. If a student cannot cite a personal experience, perhaps, he or she can relate the example of a family member, a famous person or even someone in the media. The key is for students to provide the specific details for both the example and the reflection. The responses for this question make for great class discussion.

5. When Robinson moved to the US, he noticed that the hierarchical structure of the modern educational system is organized to put English (languages) and math at the top and the arts at the bottom, especially drama and dance.

6. Robinson creates an image of the body being a vehicle for the head. He humorously invites the audience to picture university professors (for whom the whole education system is created according to Robinson) using their bodies as transports for their heads to get to meetings or dancing uncoordinatedly at a conference and then going home to write an academic paper about the experience. Encourage students to draw this image and, if possible, show these images in class. For the extension activity, ask students to create their own visual image to replace this outdated idea.
7. A. One-sentence summary- The modern educational system, established in the 19th century, is based on academic ability and work-related usefulness to meet the needs of industrialism.

B. Creative people often feel left out of the process because their talents lie in other areas than work-related use (math and language) or academic ability. Students answers may vary as they share their own experiences to agree or disagree with Robinson.

8. A. According to Robinson, intelligence is diverse, dynamic and distinct. He defines creativity as “the process of having original ideas that have value” which Robinson believes “comes about through the interaction of different disciplinary ways of seeing things.”

C. Students will need to establish an argument without straddling the fence (defend, challenge or qualify) and provide specific details to support their claim.

9. He ends his talk with the story of Gillian Lynne, famous choreographer. He related her lack of academic success as a student. By recognizing that her talents lay outside the classroom and showing how her placement in dance classes allowed her to think while she moved, Robinson’s use of Lynne as an example shows how fostering creativity can lead to extraordinary success. He uses this story to illustrate his main point of the TED Talk, which is for his audience to reconsider contemporary ideas about creativity and human capacity. He uses this wonderful sentence: Our education system has mined our minds in the way that we strip-mine the earth: for a particular commodity.” Teachers may want to write this sentence on the board and examine the language (syntax) of the sentence.

10. Robinson believes we need to be wiser about how we use the “gift” of human imagination by educating the whole child- academically and creatively. He wants modern education to change to incorporate creativity and talents.
Extension Activity: (answers will vary)

Common Core Standards

- Reading Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects 6–12
  - RST.11-12.5. Analyze how the text structures information or ideas into categories or hierarchies, demonstrating understanding of the information or ideas.
  - RST.11-12.6. Analyze the author’s purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text, identifying important issues that remain unresolved.
  - RST.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

- Mathematics- Standards for Mathematical Practice
  - Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
    - Mathematically proficient students make sense of the quantities and their relationships in problem situations. Students bring two complementary abilities to bear on problems involving quantitative relationships: the ability to decontextualize—to abstract a given situation and represent it symbolically and manipulate the representing symbols as if they have a life of their own, without necessarily attending to their referents—and the ability to contextualize, to pause as needed during the manipulation process in order to probe into the referents for the symbols involved. Quantitative reasoning entails habits of creating a coherent representation of the problem at hand; considering the units involved; attending to the meaning of quantities, not just how to compute them; and knowing and flexibly using different properties of operations and objects.
  - Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
    - Mathematically proficient students understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments. They make conjectures and build a logical progression of statements to explore the truth of their conjectures.
They are able to analyze situations by breaking them into cases, and can recognize and use counterexamples. They justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the arguments of others. They reason inductively about data, making plausible arguments that take into account the context from which the data arose. Mathematically proficient students are also able to compare the effectiveness of two plausible arguments, distinguish correct logic or reasoning from that which is flawed, and—if there is a flaw in an argument—explain what it is. Elementary students can construct arguments using concrete referents such as objects, drawings, diagrams, and actions. Such arguments can make sense and be correct, even though they are not generalized or made formal until later grades. Later, students learn to determine domains to which an argument applies. Students at all grades can listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense, and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments.