FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Learning to be Entrepreneurs

Professor Kim Sung Il, of the Brain and Motivation Research Institute in South Korea, has produced brain scans that correspond to a range of cognitive processes, including high-stakes testing, playing instruments, and curiosity. His findings are revelatory as to the importance of engagement in learning. This emotional state builds emotional and cognitive resilience, encourages creativity, fosters positive responses to feedback and reduces anxiety.

Kim discerned what types of activities tend to generate most engagement among learners, and they include: multi-sensory stimuli; relevance; autonomy; and ongoing, immediate feedback.

Crucially, engagement creates a positive bias towards the content or material being studied, which led Kim to conclude: "if you can't make material interesting, don't teach it, because you will lastingly damage it in the learner's mind".

Some Desirable Attributes :

Professor Root-Bernstein, from Michigan State University, distinguishes between knowledge, creativity and innovation, which are in ascending degree of complexity. **Knowing** consists of storing in your head what is available elsewhere; **creativity** relies on imagining what isn't available elsewhere; **innovation** requires creativity to actually work in context.

Task-design, explains Root-Bernstein, is central to fostering creativity, with desirable attributes including:

- Designing tasks that can be resolved in several ways
- Avoiding laying out all the steps to reach the resolution
- Planning cross-curricular tasks
- Rewarding originality and reflectivity
- Asking questions that begin with why or how (rather than what)
- Instructing people to create (rather than answer)

"The difference between administrators and innovators is broader thinking: the ability to imagine, test the efficacy and deploy what is not before their eyes."

Consider :

How often do you lay out tasks in the way described? How much is your organisation damping down innovation as a result? There are always better ways to allow people the freedom to be creative and the results are often a hugely impressive ROI without relinquishing overall control of direction or resources.

For an informal discussion about ways to encourage creativity and innovation as routine in your organisation's processes, get in touch with us.