



## MY WORD

WITH RODNEY MARTIN



# Create

**J**ohn Lennon's school reports, almost without exception, said he lacked application to his studies. Is there a 'creative' gene? Can schools foster creativity in children?

In each subject in the Australian national curriculum, schools will address 'creative thinking'. Does this mean your children will come home wearing a beret and carrying an artist's pallet and brush, composing a symphony on the piano or assuming the pose of Rodin's sculpture 'The thinker'? Creativity is more than the arts.

Creativity is being able to think outside the ordinary, to invent new ways to solve old problems, to produce original things or ideas that do not yet exist. Creativity is Howard Florey's pioneering ways for developing penicillin, the first antibiotic. It is Einstein's use of mathematics to express his equation  $E = mc^2$ . These creative individuals changed the world.

Creativity means different things to different people.

"Mum, you are an accountant. Is that creative?"

"Oh, yes! I'm often asked to be very creative."

So what can you expect from your children as schools spotlight creative thinking? Good teachers have always done this intuitively. But the modern curriculum details how this will become more common in classrooms.

Your children could become more questioning. 'Heaven help us' you say after a hard day's work. But think of their questioning as young minds testing ideas and exploring possibilities.

Modern technology offers interactive software for children to create their own illustrated stories and solve games and puzzles. This is already available online for schools and homes. Your children's inventive explorations need an audience, so be patient, attentive and delighted when they demonstrate and discuss their ideas.

The important thing is that young children feel their attempts at creativity are valued by those whose attention and encouragement matters most – family, friends and teachers.

Only one teacher in John Lennon's school reports noted his creativity. That's the problem for thinkers outside the ordinary – their creative energy is often overlooked, misunderstood or under-valued.

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*His SA family business, Era Publications, creates interactive online children's books for homes, schools and public libraries around the world. (See free samples at [www.erapublications.com/south-kids](http://www.erapublications.com/south-kids).)*