UNIVERSAL CONCERN THAT CREATIVITY IS SUFFERING AT WORK AND SCHOOL

„People spend only 25% of their time at work creating"
(Nasdaq:ADBE [3])

Constant technological change will have an unpredictable and uncertain effect on the way we live and work. Reforming education—putting in place an education appropriate for a digital age—is a challenge. *„The experience of preparing for an „accreditation event" forced me to confront some of the hard realities about the current state of education. Put bluntly, I thought reform would be easier and that creativity and innovation would be welcomed. After all, most of the people that I talk to in my working life—both inside and outside the university—are convinced that education must change. Everyone agrees it is necessary to include "creativity", "teamwork", innovation" and "storytelling" in all levels of education. This is particularly true in the context of a digital age"* say Ken Robinson [1].

Giving young people the skill-set to deal with this uncertainty is the only option. But, even if we leave the on-going *„technological revolution"* out of the discussion, there is lots of evidence that our education system is failing. *Talk to people who have experience in practice and most will agree that the educational system should stimulate, instead of squander, the creative potential of young people.* It is acknowledged that this is a vital element in preparing them for the world of work. *But, everyone I talk to seems to agree that the "gap" between the worlds of "education" and "industry" is growing.*

Creativity is a phenomenon that is constantly evolving, redefining itself each day with every new creation. Something that teachers & students use & rely heavily upon while at school, creativity is a major factor in all that we do, but what is the status of Creativity in our classrooms & schools? How are students & teachers working with this phenomenon? Are schools killing Creativity?

„How Schools Are Killing Creativity?" asked Ken Robinson, Ph.D., an internationally recognized leader in the development of education, creativity and innovation. Creative people don't follow the crowds; they seek out the blank spots on the map. Creative people wander through faraway and forgotten traditions and then integrate marginal perspectives back to the mainstream. Instead of being fastest around the tracks everybody knows, creative people move adaptively through wildernesses nobody knows. Students have to jump through ever-more demanding, preassigned academic hoops. Instead of developing a passion for one subject, they're rewarded for becoming professional students, getting great grades across all subjects, regardless of their intrinsic interests. Instead of wandering across strange domains, they have to prudently apportion their time, making productive use of each hour.

But the culture of schools is driven by standardization – common core standards, standardized curriculum, standardized tests. They are appreciated creativity-based projects within school time but why is the inclusion of passion-based and creativity-driven pursuits considered an add-on or special occasion? It known that creativity is a great intrinsic motivator, the essence for innovation, and important for the continued evolution of the self and humankind. For some of the more creative kids, their creativity will help them survive their standardized school years. For others, this standardization crushes their passions, spirits, joy.

Let's try to follow the path to knowing a child from kindergarten to university*.* Remember being a kid and wanting to play around? No one told you how to use your imagination or taught you how to be creative. You played with LEGOS. You pretended you were an astronaut and imagined traveling in space. Being naturally creative, you asked questions like *„Why is the grass green?"* and *„Are we alone?"* – questions no wise man could answer. Then came school, a child's worst nightmare. You learned to live in a rotten environment. You were bullied, made fun of, and you had this teacher that told you to stop dreaming and live in reality. So what did you learn at school? You learned to stop questioning the world, to go with the flow, and that there's only one right answer to each question. The *„whys"* you have always wanted to ask are never on the test, and they are omitted from the curriculum.

Many people have written about ways to change education, but what good has it done if we are leaving out the voice of the students? Years continue to pass, some students graduate, some fail out, some drop out and nothing really changes. The education system reminds of a dictator that is unwilling to step down. We are aware that no education system is perfect. We memorize, study for the test and forget, only to know 10 years later

what an atrocious world we have been constructing. *„I strongly feel that our methodologies in schools are demolishing creativity. Students have lost their capacity of creation simply because our teaching methods don't stimulate innovation and creativity… I speak about education from an unflattering point of view — maybe because it is destroying our fascinating, curious minds. I don't claim to be an expert in education. I am still a student and I speak for myself. I believe that students should have a voice in the education system today, because mainly they are the ones who are being educated. The control of education should be in the hands of students. They should be centered first and foremost"* say Ken Robinson.

Creativity isn't a test to take, a skill to learn, or a program to develop. Creativity is seeing things in new ways, breaking barriers that stood in front of you for some time. Creativity is the art of hearing a song that has never been written or seeing a work of art on empty canvas. Its essence is in its freshness and the ability to make dreams come to life.

In the 21st century, the world demands students who can think creatively and critically. As technology develops, we will have robots to do all the basic work for us. However, it is our mission to ensure that the next generation will be full of inventors, musicians, painters, mathematicians who will, in turn, bring humanity to another level.

Today's teaching techniques are taking the beauty out of learning. Diminishing creativity from our student's mind is a serious problem with wide-reaching effects. How exactly are schools diminishing creativity? We learn that being „*good*" means sitting still and nodding yes, while being „*bad*" means attempting to do things differently. The cycle of sitting still, memorizing, testing and getting a job have existed for a long time now and few dared to challenge it. However, those who dared to challenge the status quo like Albert Einstein, the Wright brothers, and Walt Disney have changed the course of history.

How do we expect students to be creative if teachers give them the outline, the title, and the structure of their „*creative writing assignment?*". We give students model answers to memorize, we give a specific title to write a poem about, and we truly give them everything but the freedom to express their ideas. Youth have fresh ideas. While teachers complain that students are spending an awful lot of time on social networking, they forget to mention that it's the only way we, the students, can have our voice heard. Education isn't about facts being stored in our minds so that we can get

tested on them. Education is the beauty to nurture creativity, to fuel curiosity and to create a well-rounded person.

Particularly interesting is the study [3]. Interviews of 5000 adults across the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France and Japan expose surprising attitudes and beliefs about creativity, providing new insights into the role of creativity in business, education and society overall. The data set for each country is nationally representative of the population of that country. *„The research shows 8 in 10 people feel that unlocking creativity is critical to economic growth and nearly two-thirds of respondents feel creativity is valuable to society, yet a striking minority – only 1 in 4 people – believe they are living up to their own creative potential. More than half of those surveyed feel that creativity is being stifled by their education systems, and many believe creativity is taken for granted (52% globally, 70% in the United States). One of the myths of creativity is that very few people are really creative,"* said Ken Robinson. *„The truth is that everyone has great capacities but not everyone develops them. One of the problems is that too often our educational systems don't enable students to develop their natural creative powers. Instead, they promote uniformity and standardization. The result is that we're draining people of their creative possibilities and, as this study reveals, producing a workforce that's conditioned to prioritize conformity over creativity".*

The basic results are shown in figure 1 [2] and 2 [3]. **Some findings of this study.**

The Creativity Gap: People spend only 25% of their time at work creating; Unlocking creative potential is seen as key to economic and societal growth; But globally less than half describe themselves as creative; Only 1 in 4 people feel that they are living up to their creative potential; Workplace Creativity Gap: There is increasing pressure to be productive rather than creative at work; People spend only 25% of their time at work creating; Globally, Japan is regarded the most creative country, except by the Japanese; Universal concern that educational system is stifling creativity Americans express strongest concern that they're NOT living up to their creative potential; Americans believe the US is the most creative.

Creativity Drivers & Barriers: People need more time, training and an environment where they can think *creatively; 40% of people state that it is essential to have tools to create (more than 50% in US); Creativity defines a person and enables them*
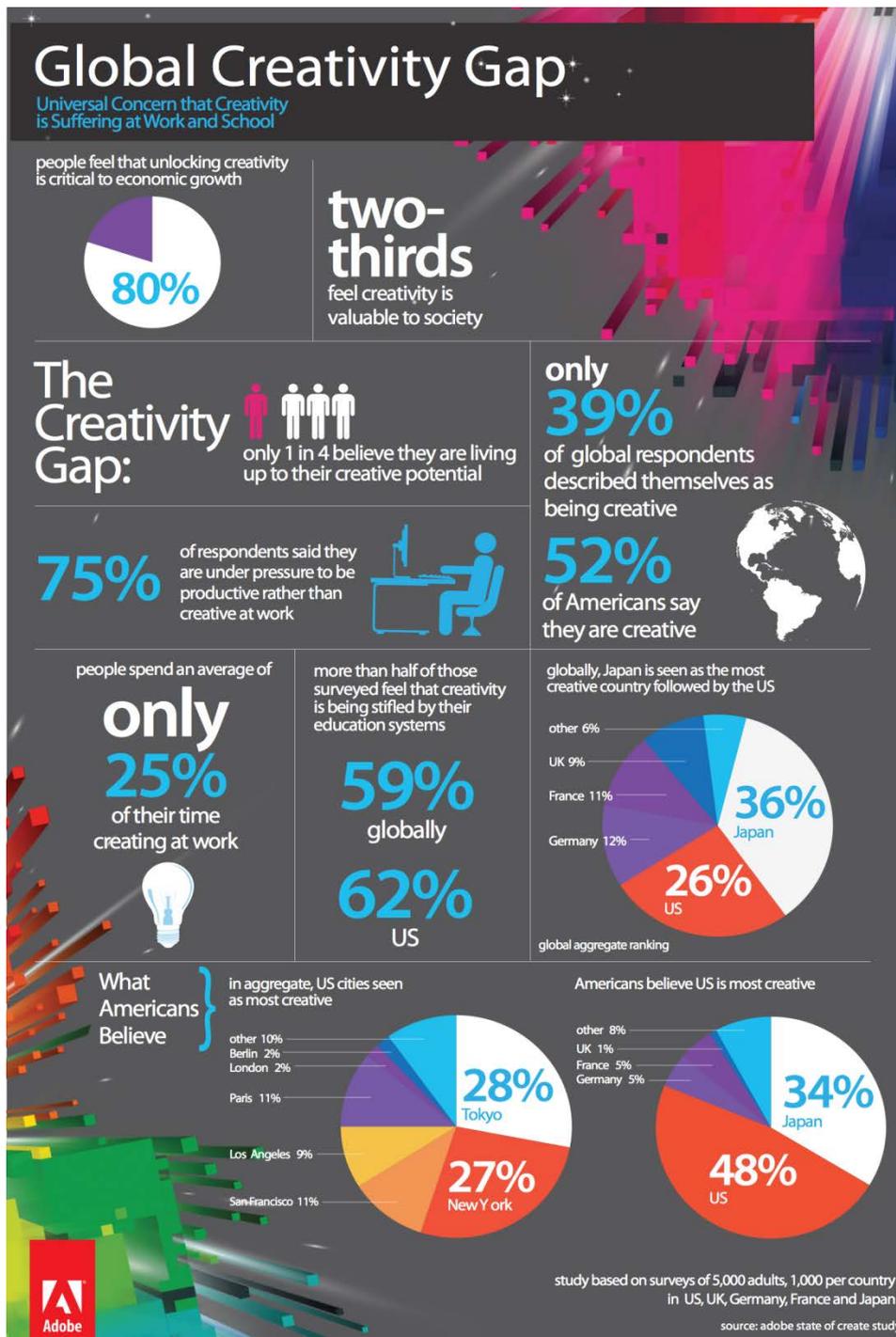
to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others; creativity is something that they share; Time and money are seen as the biggest challenges to being able to create; A majority of people prefer to create by themselves; Technology helps people overcome their own creative limitations and inspires them [3].

References

1. Robinson K. *Do schools kill creativity? https://hackernoon.com/does-education-kill-creativity-f3178540f5e3*

2. *https://usergeneratededucation.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/adobe_state_of_create_infographic.png*

3. *State of Create global benchmark study http://www.adobe.com/aboutadobe/pressroom/pdfs/Adobe_State_of_Create_Global_Benchmark_Study.pdf*

Column written by professor Valeriu Dulgheru, Ph.D. Dr. Sc. from Technical University of Moldova
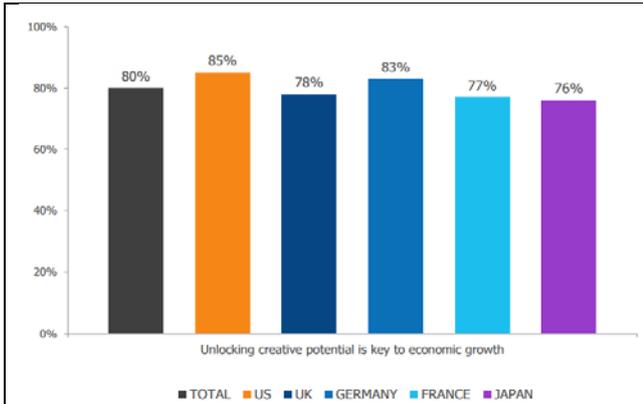
Creativity is key to driving economic growth [3]
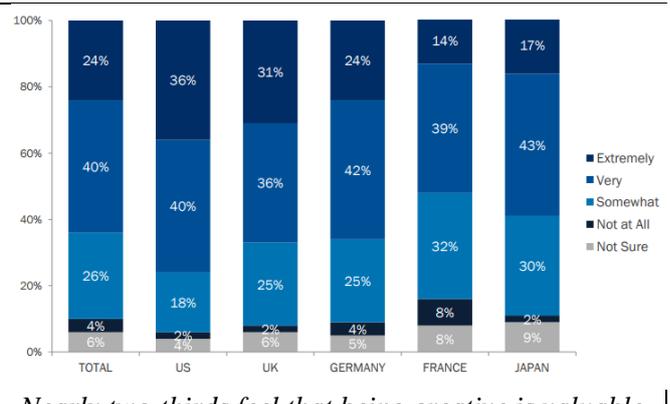
Nearly two-thirds feel that being creative is valuable to society (US: Highest 76%) [3]
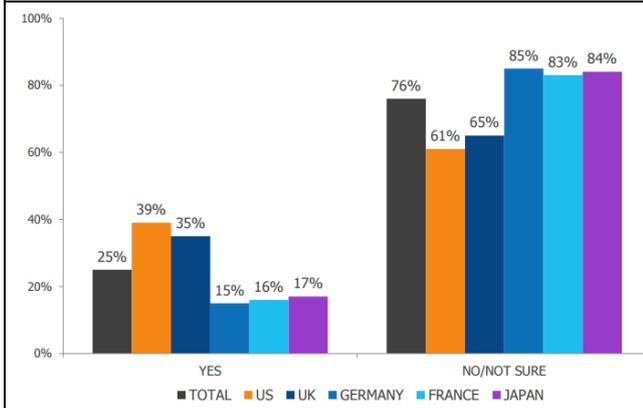
The Creativity Gap: Only 1 in 4 people feel that they are living up to their creative potential [3]
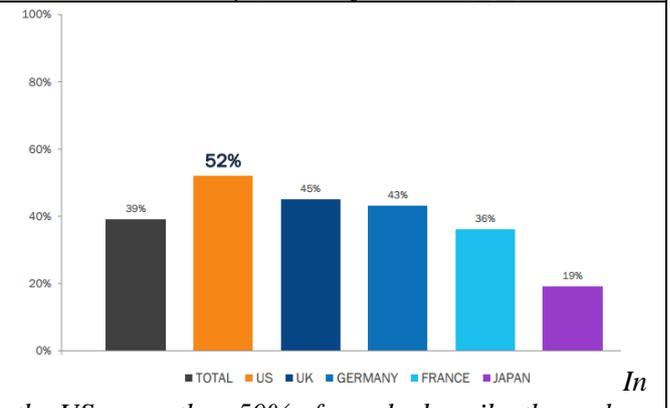
In the US, more than 50% of people describe themselves as creative (39% globally) [3]
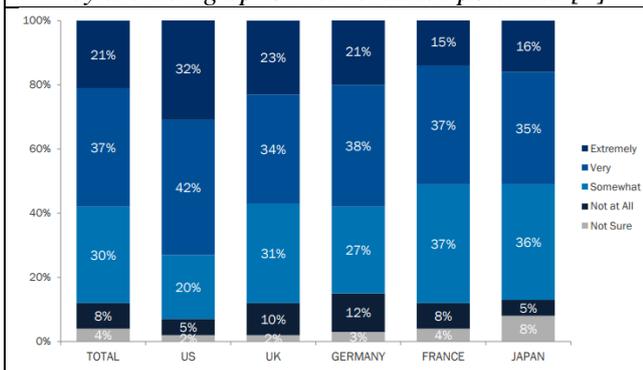
Globally, 3 in 5 say being creative is important to them (US: 3 in 4 state it is important) [3]
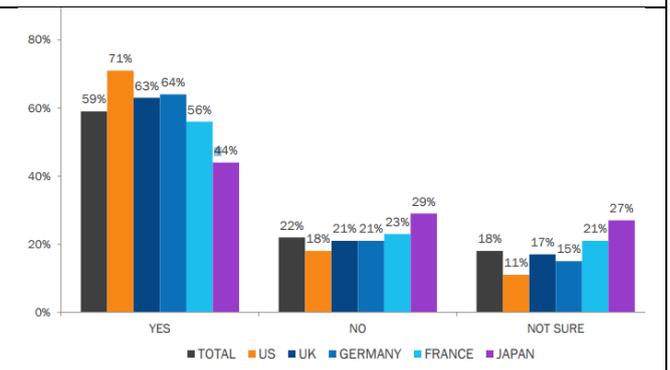
6 in 10 adults consider themselves to be someone who creates (US: 7 in 10) [3]
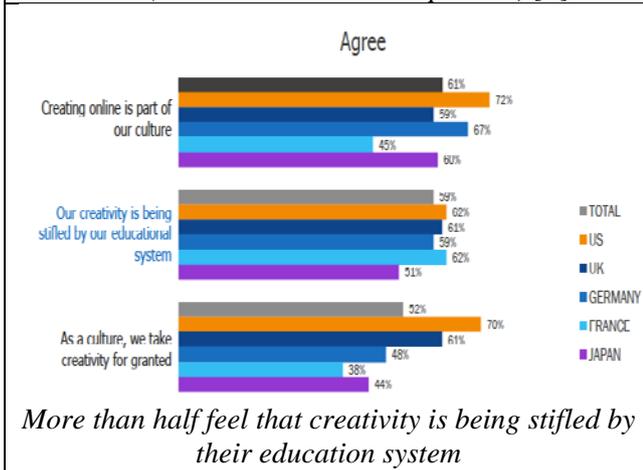
More than half feel that creativity is being stifled by their education system
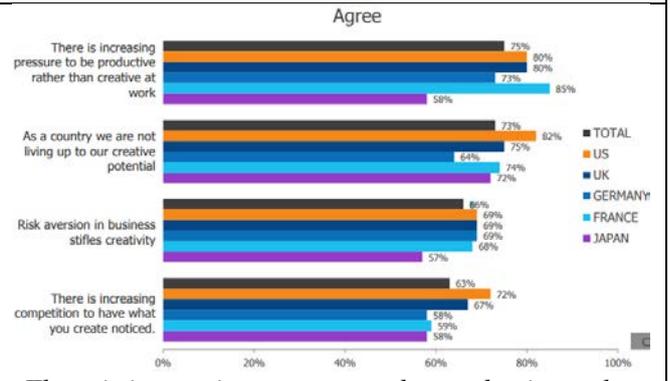
There is increasing pressure to be productive rather than creative at work (US: Most people state we're not achieving potential)