

Design Question:

*What is the relationship between creative problem solving, learning and arts education?*

Creativity is a mindset that is considered critical to success. Employers name “creative problem solving” as one of the top two or three skills that employees need to succeed as the complexity and pace of work render specific knowledge less useful than agility and resilience. Educators, alike, cite creative thinking as one of the top priorities for equipping students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even with the acknowledged importance of creative problem solving, educators and prospective employers struggle to understand, deploy and measure it.

Often considered the domain of artists, creativity has not been harnessed as a catalyst for learning in American education. Educators cringe at assessing creativity and creative problem-solving, capacities viewed as inscrutable, reflective of talent rather than training, and ignored in teacher-training. Arts educators, considered leaders in creativity, do not necessarily teach creativity and, when they do, sometimes ghetto creativity to the studio. By asking the question, “what is the relationship between creative problem solving, learning and arts education?” we will seek to articulate the ways arts education equips students to utilize abstract thinking, inquiry and creative confidence and how to best measure the impact. This conversation is critical as the recognition of the limitations of current educational practices and the assessments to measure these skills and mindsets is building.

*This symposium seeks to map how creativity matters in school and in the workforce, to design education and assessment systems that honor, acknowledge, and mold the creative problem solver for the next generation.*

#### Convening Goals and Activities

A one-day convening, produced by the deLaski Family Foundation and Community Works, and hosted by the Kennedy Center, including pioneering thought leaders from cultural institutions, arts organizations, K-12 schools and colleges will investigate how creativity is being intentionally taught and assessed in our educational system. Our conversations will focus on mapping the years from high school to postsecondary, including ways new criteria, models and assessments for that age group might inform educational practices and workforce development.

Symposium participants will collaborate to translate the implicit assumptions about creative problem solving into explicit solutions. They will explore creative problem solving models to design their own vocabulary for creativity, in order to build a future system where teachers and students intentionally deploy creativity and creative problem solving. With Dr. Sarah Cunningham, Executive Director of Research, School of the Arts, VCU, as facilitator, participants will map the creative problem-solving trajectory during the challenging years of high school and undergraduate college. Experimentation with assessment models will further define how creative skills productively and dynamically transfer to the workforce and replicable prototypes produced in this symposium will help educators better measure creativity in their classrooms.