hey want to change the rules again. I can only imagine the frustration and anger teachers and administrators are feeling. They’ve been berated for failing our children and failing our nation: students don’t know what they need to know. To attack the problem, state and federal governments have imposed standards: this is what all children must know; we’ll test them to ensure they know it, and we’ll judge schools based on the children’s test scores. Eleven years after passage of “No child left behind,” a recent *NY Daily News* headline declared: “48% of schools flunk ‘No Child’ standards.”

“Schools flunk:” that’s harsh; it seems that public shaming and humiliation are the order of the day. Teachers, principals and superintendents are feeling the pressure. There’s been one cheating scandal after another: not students with crib sheets, mind you, but administrators and classroom teachers...
who helped students answer test questions or changed responses on test papers after they were turned in—all in the name of demonstrating "adequate yearly progress (AYP)."

At the same time, the focus on factual knowledge has been dismissed as "so 19th century," by those asking "what will students need to succeed in the real world of the 21st century?" Their answers to that question have been a variation on this theme:

1. character (self-discipline, empathy, integrity, resilience, and courage);
2. creativity and entrepreneurial spirit;
3. real-world problem-solving (filtering, analysis, and synthesis);
4. public speaking/communications;
5. teaming; and
6. leadership.

You’ll notice that this list of skills and personal characteristics is not based on factual information, and none of them could be evaluated by a multiple choice standardized test.

Now into the fray comes the call for a creativity index for schools. As reported in Education Week, "at a time when U.S. political and business leaders are raising concerns about the need to better nurture creativity and innovative thinking among young people, several states are exploring the development of an index that would gauge the extent to which schools provide opportunities to foster those qualities."

"Creativity" in this context includes the arts, but is much more than that. It directly relates to items 2 and 3 above: creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, and real-world problem solving. It reminds me of Peter Sims’ question in his Wall Street Journal article, “The Montessori Mafia.” "Is there something about the Montessori approach that nurtures creativity and inventiveness that we can all learn from?"

Now comes the crux of the matter: the real reason that public school teachers and administrators will be driven wild by the imposition of a creativity index on top of the culture of high-stakes testing. The two standards are diametrically opposed to each other. How so?

In the test-driven, information-based, “this is what you need to know” culture of conventional schools, answers are right or wrong, black or white. Being wrong is… well, wrong. In fact, if you are wrong on a standardized test, your teacher might even be tempted to change the answer for you.

Creativity begins from a willingness to be experimental and exploratory. That can be in the arts, in science, in engineering, or in business. You may have learned “creative brainstorming” at work, a process that begins with this statement: “generate as many ideas as possible, and don’t evaluate/criticize any of them. (We’ll get to that later.)” Many people find this difficult. Some people are reluctant to put any ideas on the table, even ones that are not so wild. Why? They don’t want to appear foolish; they don’t want to be embarrassed; they don’t want to be wrong. Facilitators will say, “there’s no right or wrong. At this stage, there are no bad ideas.” However, this runs counter to our school experience where every answer is either right or wrong – and you don’t want to be wrong.

Creativity begins from a willingness to be wrong, to make mistakes on the way to a creative solution – and to accept the truth that not all ideas are good ones, not all ideas lead to great inventions or to great works of art, and that’s okay. The only way to get to a great invention or a great work of art is to be courageous and willing to be wrong. If you aren’t making enough mistakes, try harder.

And in conventional schools of 21st century America, that just isn’t acceptable.

*(Or do you prefer ‘indices’?)*

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Underlined phrases in this article are links to websites—access them in the online edition (link on the left side of the homepage).
Farewell, Sweet Maiden

As the curtain went up, we saw the colorful set, beautiful costumes, and smiling faces ready to convey the story of the Maiden in the Moon. Soft voices could be heard accompanied by the beautiful sound of the Story Teller, Soprano Dr. Ana Trevino-Godfrey. All of the hard work that went into preparing for this performance came down to one night. And what a night it was!

This wonderfully choreographed opera, under the direction of William and Hollis Bokhout, created an enchanting experience. Each elementary child played a critical role in this performance. From the first grade chorus to the Master Archer and the Maiden herself, we learned the ancient Chinese legend of how the maiden can be seen during a full moon. The Zodiacs told their stories and each Trio, Quartet, and Soloist added their own artistic flair to help us understand this ancient legend. As the story came to a close, the villagers ended the festival with a beautiful lantern dance, while the Master Archer and Chang-E, the Moon Maiden, watched from the full moon.

This production was possible because of the creativity and strong leadership of our Opera Co-Chairs Tanya Gee and Jane Greenberg and their amazing team of parent volunteers. Bravo!

The Post Oak teachers, assistants, and staff smoothly connected all the dots and assisted the children every step of the way. Our hard-working Opera Committee paid special attention to all the little details necessary for such an event. The crew created an authentic set that enhanced the ability to tell such a story on stage. Student artwork played an important role in the creation of our T-shirts, tickets, and marketing materials. We had 162 elementary children adding their own personal talent and creativity to create such a special night for all the guests. This was evident in the enthusiasm of the audience during the curtain calls. The cheers can still be heard around the Dunham Theater. We packed the house – over 600 tickets were sold in order to help cover the costs of the production.

As we say farewell to The Moon Maiden, it is an honor to add this Opera to the biennial Post Oak tradition. As the old saying goes, “it takes a village to raise a child;” it is evident that it takes a village to create an opera. Special thanks go out to the entire Post Oak Community for truly making our school such a wonderful and unique place.

–Amy Kirchner, Opera Marketing

Relive the opera again and again by ordering your own DVD of the event, available for $35. Use this form or visit www.mmvideo.biz/opera for ordering information.

Please make checks* payable to: Moving Memories Video

Total amount is due at the time of order. The DVDs will be available in 7–10 days. They will be mailed to you. *At this time they can only accept checks.

As a bonus to those visiting his website, the videographer has made some wonderful snapshots available for downloading. For even more photos, visit Post Oak’s website: Parent Community › Photo Galleries.

Please send payment and this completed form to: Moving Memories Video 2714 Morningview Dr. Houston, Texas 77080

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My Crew Experience

Being crew is very exciting. We use different tools to make different designs. For example, we use actual sea sponges and made the rocks all different designs and different colors. It is very important to be crew. You help with making costumes and props for some of the characters. We made the lion heads for the lions. We also made the flower petals for the fairies. We made the whole set. The tree was my favorite thing to work on. We made balls of newspaper and those are the bumps on the tree. The twigs and branches, we used sponges to make all the different colors. Then streamers were twisted and folded to make the berries and leaves. So if you think about it, without the crew, there is not much of an opera. Because who would make the set? Being crew helps with your own creativity.

My experience in crew for this opera was to help build a bush, tree, rocks, clouds, water and a gate. It was fun and I loved building rocks and clouds for the opera, because we used paper balls for the rocks and we painted the clouds. This experience makes me want to do it again next year.

This year I wanted to be in crew because I have never been in crew. When I was able to be in the opera I put down crew, crew, crew, but I was chosen to be in the Opera. This year I was chosen to be in crew. Our first crew session was very fun. We put decorations on one of the lion heads. What we did was we thought of a design then we drew it on the lions head with chalk. The next day we painted in the designs. We did a lot of sponge painting, but I didn’t like it because it took a long time. One fun thing was that we made mini trees. The way we made them was we took some brown paper and twisted it and wrapped it in green wire. Then we painted them. They turned out very well. That was my crew experience.

My experience of crew was very fun. The first thing that we did was make the leaves of the tree. When we finished it looked like real leaves. The next thing we did was we made crumbled newspaper balls and we glued them together to make the trunk of the tree. And the next thing that we did was we painted some parts of the waves light blue instead of dark blue. The next thing we did was we crumbled newspapers into balls and we glued them to clouds. And then it looked like it was going to have a thunderstorm. So it was really fun.

This is the second time I am doing crew. I’ve been doing crew for Pearl and Moon Maiden. For Moon Maiden I did part of the arch and part of the tree and sandy stuff. The people in my class that did crew were and me. We did crew for about 4–6 weeks. Crew is a lot of fun for a lot of people and me. I think we did better on Moon Maiden than Pearl. For Moon Maiden the main people are and but in Pearl it was . In Pearl there was a lot more people in crew than in this one. In both operas crew was in Mrs. Pinto’s class. Last year it was in Episcopal High School. My favorite part was painting the tree.

When I was in crew I built a tree, a bush, rocks, waves and clouds. Crew is a very fun and cool experience and I am going to be crew for next opera.

Being in crew was great. We did lots of things like lion heads, trees, rocks, leaves, berries, flowers, and that’s all I remember doing at crew. It was a great experience because I really like doing art! It was great!

My experience in crew was fun and exciting and we got to build plants, clouds and the sand. I love to build stuff and it is fun. Crew was really exciting and we played in crew sometimes.
I chose to be in crew because I love drawing, painting, building, and crafting. I have always thought that I was better at making things than I was acting or singing by a small bit. My experience was an outstanding one; I have done and learned so much that no matter how much I would ever want to get on stage I would never rue being in crew. We designed lion heads, the village gate, the sea, the coastline, the tree, the leaves, the bushes, and so many other things. I wish I could do more for the set. I love set making.

The participation of all the crew members insure to have a great benefit to the performance. Everything I have learned will help me build my Nerf Coliseum in about a day! Being in crew was an extraordinary experience and it is sad to stop but I can’t wait until the day of the opera to see the progress we have made.

I like being crew. I was in crew in first grade and third grade. I made parts of projects like rocks, parts to make trees, painting stuff like lion heads, rocks, branches and leaves. I went to crew on Mondays and Tuesdays. Crew is in the art room. I am so excited to see what it looks like on stage tomorrow!! I picked crew twice because I liked crew in first grade and so I decided to do it again, though in first grade we did not get to do as much as in third grade and I know why we can’t do the complex stuff in first grade. It’s because we were younger then.

Being in crew is amazing! I chose to be in crew because I like to paint, build things, and I think I am pretty good at art. Unfortunately, I was in India for some time, and I missed three weeks of school, and since I missed those three weeks of school, I also missed some crew work.

When I got back, I had crew work almost every day and I loved it! Also crew is very important, because without crew there would be no props and without the props the opera would not be as good as it could have been if there were props. In crew we made rocks, mountains, stairs, and clouds. (The rocks were easiest), and the stairs were hardest. To make the rocks, we crumpled newspaper, glued it to a cardboard box, which we covered with tissue paper, and painted the paper. The stairs were a piece of cardboard that we sponge painted. It was exciting for me to see the scenery for the opera come to life!

I liked being in crew because my mom was always there. My mom would almost every class come to crew. It was very exciting when my mom was there because she would always help me if I got stuck, and she would help others too. My best part was making the dragon head! The reason is because you got to paint the head and you got to cut the head, but the only bad part is I cut my finger, but when it came out the head looked great and my finger is great too!!

On the first day at crew we made paper balls for the tree to make it look bushy. The second day we glued the balls to cardboard. Then after winter break we also painted the side of the stairs, dots on the clouds, and mountain. We covered a cardboard box with paper to make it look like a rock. At the end everything looked awesome!

I think crew is super awesome! I think it is very important to be crew or else there would be a very bare stage! I chose to be crew because I like to paint and build things and built stages and of course watch the opera! During crew we made a tree and painted dots on clouds and rocks and mountains. We also made stairs. It was really fun to sponge paint.
Students make their mark

What left those marks? Was it a bearkat? No, it was a group of Middle School students under the guidance of Art Teacher Diana Muñiz that painted the paws in the Peace Circle. On a Friday afternoon, and began the measuring, marking, and painting of 178 paw prints in order to guide Primary children safely through the school’s gates. It proved to be a bigger task than anticipated, so on Saturday students and along with Technology Director Mirna Andrade-Salgado, came back to finish the job.

Arrivals on the following Monday morning saw plenty of excited Primary students inspecting and then carefully stepping from paw to paw, making their way in. There was speculation about green animals having done the deed, but in the end we are grateful to our Middle School students for leading the way.

MATCHING GIFTS

Matching Gifts add up! Please help us reach our goal for the Post Oak Fund by submitting a matching gift form from your workplace. Many companies have a matching program and some even match 2 to 1. We have $2,000 to go, and every penny helps!

“Do we have the courage to be the adults that our children need us to be?”

“The cruelty crisis,” (bullying isn’t a school problem, it’s a national pastime) an article by Brené Brown, professor at the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work.

Shop & Share at Randall’s & Target

Hey Post Oak Parents! Did you know you can support our school just by buying groceries?

Through the Good Neighbor Program at Randalls, Post Oak can receive 1% of total purchases at the end of each quarter. You can link your Remarkable card to Post Oak by going to www.randalls.com and clicking on the Community Caring link at the bottom of the page. From here click on the Good Neighbor Program link and complete the short Good Neighbor Charity Addition form at the bottom of the page. Be sure to include Post Oak’s charity number 2531.

Have a Target REDcard? Through their Take Charge of Education program, cardholders can designate Post Oak to receive 1% of all Target Visa Credit Card and Target Credit Card purchases made at a Target store or at target.com and 1% of all Target Debit Card purchases made at a Target store. Target also donates 5% of all Target Visa Credit Card purchases made outside of Target. To link Post Oak to your card, go to target.com/tcoe, enter the school’s name or search by city and state, and click on the Select This School link to enter your card information. There is no limit to the amount of money we can receive, so please take advantage of this awesome giving program!

Kathryn Murphy, Development Coordinator

2012–13 Important Calendar Dates

Watch The Weekly Post and our website for more information about next year’s academic calendar.

Here are a few dates we have already determined:

- Aug. 20–24: First week for Elementary, Middle School and High School
- Aug. 27–31: First week for Infant Community and Primary
- Sept. 3: Labor Day (school closed)
- Oct. 8: Columbus Day (school closed)
- Nov. 21–23: Thanksgiving Break (school closed)
- Dec. 24–Jan. 7: Winter Break (school closed)
- Jan. 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday (school closed)
- Feb. 18: Presidents Day holiday (school closed)
- Mar. 11–15: Spring Break – only students with expanded-year contracts attend
- Mar. 29: Good Friday (school closed)
- May 27: Memorial Day (school closed)
- May 31: Last day of school
CALENDAR
For more, visit www.postoakschool.org

FEBRUARY 12–18

Mon 2/13
Bearkats basketball at Memorial Lutheran
4:00 pm

Tue 2/14
Valentine’s Day

Thu 2/16
Intramural basketball vs. St. Nicholas (gym)
4:00–4:30 pm
No Weekly Post this week

Fri 2/17
Teacher in-service
Classes not in session: only students with expanded year contracts attend

FEBRUARY 19–25

Mon 2/20
Presidents Day
(school closed)

Tue 2/21
Bearkats basketball vs. St. Stephen’s (gym)
4:15 pm
Mardi Gras

Wed 2/22
Ash Wednesday

Thu 2/23
Intramural basketball vs. St. Nicholas (gym)
4:00–4:30 pm

NOTICE BOARD

Bearkats Basketball
Feb. 13 vs. Memorial Lutheran @ Memorial, 4:00 pm
Feb. 21 vs. St. Stephen’s @ Post Oak, 4:15 (gym)
Feb. 28 vs. St. Stephen’s @ Post Oak, 4:15 (gym)

Intramural Basketball
Feb. 16 vs. St. Nicholas, 4:00–4:30 pm
Feb. 23 vs. St. Nicholas, 4:00–4:30 pm

Save the date for the next
High School Huddle/Open House
March 27, 2012
look for more information here in The Weekly Post or keep up with all the latest news by following the high school blog:
the postoakhighschool.blogspot.com/

ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST
The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year. You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org). If publication is on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 pm on the preceding Monday.

All photos in The Weekly Post are by Elaine Schweizer unless otherwise noted.

The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS)
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