



CREATIVITY



The skill to achieve a specific outcome in different ways.

“All children are born artists... the trick is to remain artists as we grow up” (Picasso)

Creative abilities are vital in soccer, with players needing to continuously adapt to unusual and unpredictable game situations. Often one special moment or set of actions can be the difference in a close game, with creativity strongly linked to goal-scoring, as well as a predictor for individual success. The best players throughout history have all been capable of using their flair, skill and imagination to win games on the highest stages.



Beyond the field of sport, however, creativity is a characteristic that - if nurtured and encouraged at an early age - can exponentially improve future quality of life, with a far-reaching influence that can encompass:

Breaking away from habits that limit us; expanding our vision, doing today's tasks better; discovering new personal opportunities and challenges; enhancing personal health and satisfaction in life; attaining career success and productivity; and expanding the quality and enjoyment of life for ourselves and others.

(Treffinger et al. 1994)

Creativity therefore represents **a higher-order disposition that will go on to differentiate the everyday life of a child**, requiring more emphasis within both sport and education programs.

WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

“Creative persons are intrigued, stimulated, and motivated to explore the unfamiliar and unstructured, by situations and things for which there is no one, clear solution or approach. It is the opposite of a fear of the unstructured and unfamiliar. It means enjoying and being attracted to situations for which there are no clear rules, no established road maps.”

Montuori (2005)

Creativity can be defined as **the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., unexpected, original) and appropriate (i.e., useful)**, with creativity in soccer often characterised as the tricks, flair and dribbling of the likes of Messi, Neymar and Ronaldo. While these are some excellent examples, many other actions within the game are also strong forms of creativity. Examples of this might be the passing ability of Kevin De Bruyne, or the ability of Harry Kane to score goals in a number of different ways.

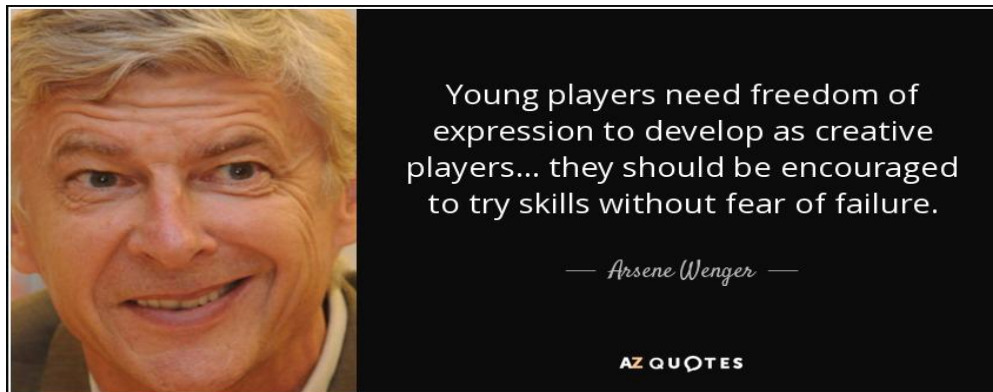
This recognises that while certain players and actions lend themselves more typically to the term 'creativity', its application can be maximised with **all** players. Providing opportunities for young players to creatively express themselves is at the heart of everything we do at C.A.R.D.S.

WHEN IS CREATIVITY BEST DEVELOPED?

‘Creative solutions are of crucial importance to sport success... and the key is let it blossom during the early years’ (Santos et al. 2016)

Research from neuroscience confirms that creativity is learned and stored during the early years of life. Young children - particularly between birth and eight years of age - represent an especially malleable age group for the fostering of creativity. **At C.A.R.D.S, our focus on creativity begins from the earliest ages and extends throughout all stages of our program.**

HOW DOES C.A.R.D.S LOOK TO DEVELOP CREATIVITY?



We recognise the importance of **safe and supportive learning environments** in inviting creativity and open-mindedness. Our training seeks to reward curiosity and exploration, encourage risk taking and provide opportunities for choice and discovery. This approach will involve players making plenty of mistakes, but also lead to highly creative moments and achievement.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERGENT THINKING

Creative actions are promoted by two complementary thinking processes: **divergent thinking** involves the recognition of a variety of solutions to solve problems in creative ways, while **convergent thinking** steers players towards the best potential solution. We look to encourage both of types of thinking in our practice, with both important ingredients of creativity.

However, it is also true that convergent thinking is heavily prioritised during a child's education, a dynamic that extends to junior sporting environments. On the other hand, divergent abilities are often neglected - or worse still, actively discouraged - despite research having identified such thinking as a valid and reliable creativity predictor.

At C.A.R.D.S, we look to engage learners in tasks and activities that develop their divergent abilities across *all* our stages of learning. We do this through *creative practice*, with studies showing that unusual or unexpected experience can promote flexible and creative thinking. Examples of such creative practice might be open-ended tasks that encourage exploration and a range of potential solutions, or creative rule modifications in small-sided games.