



Webchat - Lead your child to the Odyssey of the Mind

Parents are you ready to take your child's education to the next level? Encourage your child to think "OUTSIDE THE BOX".

*Chat with Mr. Samuel Micklus,
U.S. Expert on Creative Education.
July 14, 2010 at 11:30 am to 12.30 pm*

TRANSCRIPT:

Moderator: Hi We start at 11.30 am IST

Moderator: Hello, we are about to start.

Moderator: Mr. Micklus will introduce himself now. To be able to hear him, you must have your speakers/headphones on. Thanks

Moderator: Thank you Mr. Micklus

Shruti: What are activities that I can do at home wit my son to make him mor creative?

Samuel W Micklus: There are many activities, some simple like passing around a household utensil like a spoon and asking him what else it could be. Give responses yourself as well...

Samuel W Micklus: More detailed activities can be taking school assignments and making the homework a hands on activity where they perform a show about the subject. A lot depends on the grade level.

manpreet singh: hello mr samuel

manpreet singh: i am a parent ,and want to know about education next level

manpreet singh: how can i send my child to this school

Samuel W Micklus: I believe that infusing creativity into education will take it to the next level. Creativity is the highest form of learning and when it i used in teaching students engage in their learning and become more prepared for higher education as well as life itself.

Mita: Hi Literally too children need to be outside those boxes - TV/playstations... I have a son who's getting so addicted to the PSP and computer games, is losing interest in the world beyond. Help me!

Mita: Any tips on how a working mother should impart creative education.

Moderator: Hi all, in case you have not seen the site yet: <http://odysseyofthemind.com/>

Samuel W Micklus: I know what you mean. I have a 9 year old son back in the US who is near that point as well. Get them engaged in the world around them. Point out beautiful flowers,

clouds, etc. Then ask him to pretend he's the flower and to describe a day in his life. Pretty soon he'll be doing this over and over again with many items and parts of nature...

Samuel W Micklus: It's also fun to play word games that are both fun and educational. Our family takes turns naming animals, or places on earth, and the next person must give a response that starts with the last letter of the previous response. It's a lot of fun and you are both teaching and learning from your child. By the way, this kept my son from being overtaken by the Wii!

Mita: Thanks so much.

Ravi Prakash: which age group children are target audience

Samuel W Micklus: All. You're never too young to apply creativity and you're never too old to benefit from it. We have 5-year olds and senior citizens!

harish: Hi Sir I have one male child Name Akshat Sharam

harish: he is about 3Year+

harish: He is very creative and good think tank

Samuel W Micklus: That's wonderful. Keep encouraging him!

asam: How important is ART & Craft while growing up in a child's education ?

Samuel W Micklus: Very important on many levels. From the basics of learning hand-eye coordination to the more educational opportunity to express their thoughts and knowledge. Arts & crafts need to be a part of a well rounded education.

harish: love to colors

sanjit: Our system of education is 'free thinking brain/mind' suffocator. How do we solve the dilemma, in ethically right and practically right way for next generation. Warm Regards

Samuel W Micklus: Great question. That is what we're trying around the world. It will take some major changes in high places...

Samuel W Micklus: The mindset of how to teach and how to allow students to express their understanding of the materials must change where it can be more efficient, more well-rounded, and more fun at the same time.

Parent18: How do we encourage children to think creatively when Indian schools promote rote memorization?

Parent18: Indian schools typically swamp kids with homework, projects and assignments, leaving very little time for anything else. How can we work around this system to encourage creativity and critical thinking?

Samuel W Micklus: Rote memorization is an important part of learning but it is the basic part. We are talking with educators across the country to demonstrate that creative education is the

highest form. So far most seem very agreeable and interested. Parents can always let the people who make the decisions know their feelings.

vicky vicky : good morning sir

Samuel W Micklus: Too often homework is thought of as "The more the better the education" and that could not be more incorrect. It is the quality of education that matters and too often quantity detracts from the quality.

Samuel W Micklus: Good morning Vicky.

Parent18: In what ways can we guide preschoolers to think outside the box?

Samuel W Micklus: Good morning Vicky

Samuel W Micklus: Preschoolers are predisposed to think creatively. The change we need to make is to not smother that natural ability. Let them make up new ending to stories, have them make toothpick animals, let them explore their imaginations.

ad: Does OM have programs for older children too - the college students?

saurabh jain: dear sir

Samuel W Micklus: Yes we do. Odyssey of the Mind is for students at all grade levels.

saurabh jain: how do you do

Richa: Hello Mr. Micklus. Do you have any suggestions for parents who may be short on time--balancing their own jobs and the kids' school routines--for any suggestions. Thanks.

Samuel W Micklus: Well, thank you. Hope you are well too!

Samuel W Micklus: The best advice on parents short on time is to make the most of it. Read stories to your children before they go to sleep. Let them make up a story.

Our family does this: One picks an animal, one picks a color, one picks a place, and one picks anything else. We then take turns telling stories that include all four.

parent: I agree that word games are a great idea - also takes the tedium out of long car journeys. What other family activities ca you suggest which cut across ages but are basically designed to make the children think creatively?

Samuel W Micklus: First, unplug the gadgets and go out and spend time together when you can...

Samuel W Micklus: Then bring out a ball and toss it, kick it, and let your children make up their own brand new to the world game. You'll have a blast and age won't matter.

Kamal: Hi Mr. Micklus, Can u suggest me some activities for my 8 year old son and tips to develop his interest in creative education. Suggest me some websites names which are helpful.

Samuel W Micklus: There are a lot of websites that have interactive games and activities. However, I would try to focus more on sharing and that is much more personal. If you really want to find the web sites you can search using "Creative On Line Activities."

RB: Creative education is broadly understood in terms of letting the child be and let him decide what he wants to do. Does this mean sculpting and parenting the child to a "better future" are not required?

Samuel W Micklus: No, that is a misunderstood concept of creative expression. Your child must use creativity in a productive manner...

Cynthia: What kind of emphasis should the Indian education system put on creative education when extremely important (the board) exams that determine students' futures don't reward creative thinking?

Samuel W Micklus: RB This means they learn the skills in fun but educational projects, in order to develop the creative problem solving skills and to apply them to real world issues.

Samuel W Micklus: Cynthia, that's a tough one. We need to start from the bottom up as far as interjecting creativity in the schools when we talk of grade levels. When that shows itself to work, as it will, those students will blaze a path for future students. The problem is those in school while that transition takes place.

parent: I think education is changing in India and as a parent of a 10 year old I can see that schools are now not encouraging rote learning so much and are trying to be innovative. Mr. Micklus: what is your candid view of the Indian schools you have visited so far and the children and teachers you have interacted with?

Samuel W Micklus: My candid view, and if you knew me you'd know that's all I give, is that the schools I've visited are very aware of the benefits of creativity in education and the teachers seem ready to add it even if it is not mandated by the powers that be.

Cynthia: Hi Mr Micklus, do you have any suggestions for international-school children who are at the high school/early university level to become more creative? Do you think it's still possible to change the way we learn at that age?

Samuel W Micklus: I know it is. We have senior citizens who participate in OM. You're already creative you just don't know it and schools don't provide you opportunities to show it,

Anjana Sharma: Hello! Should dance forms and music forms be part of education while growing up in a child's education ?

Anuj Bhatia: Hi Samuel

Samuel W Micklus: I think all children should be introduced to them and that they be made available as an option for those who wish to pursue them further. Sadly, too many in authority don't recognize the inherent benefits and education that can be learned and expressed through music, dance, art, etc.

Anuj Bhatia: I am interested in knowing how I can ensure that my 2 year old grows up into a creative and confident boy...

Anuj Bhatia: Hi Samuel. I am interested in knowing how I can ensure that my 2 year old grows up into a creative and confident boy...what kind of educational and fun activities should be undertaken at home...?

Samuel W Micklus: Well, you will play a key role. Until things change make sure you make his education creative right from the start. Ask the "What if..." and "How else..." questions. I wish you the best.

meenakshi: Hello sir

Samuel W Micklus: Hello

meenakshi: my 7 year daughter is very scared to learn new concepts... is this some kind of a problem? She only likes to repeat the things that she knows well but gets very stressed if I ask her to try out new books/concepts.

Samuel W Micklus: That's normal for a lot of children. In fact, some thrive in the current educational system. This is why we wish to enhance it as opposed to overturn it...

Eisha Aleem: Hello Mr. Micklus.. what do you think about the parent- teacher relationship, all the activities carried out at home are fine, but it is the school that influences the children to a greater extent..

Samuel W Micklus: Let her grow into herself. I find that children are more likely to take risks and try new things when they are around others. That's bad when you're not there to make sure they are not getting into trouble, but it's good when you can control the experience. Ask her and her friends, "Who wants...?" and see what happens.

Cynthia: If a school doesn't encourage creativity, but parents at home do, is there a danger of child being frustrated that his creativity isn't being recognised?

Samuel W Micklus: Hi Eisha, I think parents should get acquainted with their children's educators. I find that teachers prefer this as long as it is not only a meeting to complain about things. Teachers need to know your children's preferences and weaknesses that only a parent can see. My wife and I are very involved in our children's schools.

Eisha Aleem: Thank you..

Samuel W Micklus: Hi Cynthia. There's always a chance for frustration. With practice at home, your child might be able to invoke imagination into the classroom. Creativity and Enjoyable learning can be contagious so give it a try!

RB: How can teachers and parents collaborate to ensure that a child is always involved in creative ways of learning?

Samuel W Micklus: There is no advice that will work every time. However, volunteer to read to their class, to do fun educational activities in the school, etc. Lead the way and let them follow!

gopika: hi i hv a 10month old son and i would also like to know what activities can i do at home to stimulate him?

SwamiN56: Good morning Mr Micklus, as I see many of these questions address younger children, do you have suggestions on how to motivate slightly older kids - in ages 12-15 on how to be interested in their studies?

Samuel W Micklus: I'm not familiar with raising an infant in India but in the US we already do creative things like peek-a-boo, look at colors, roll a ball, etc. When they get older you might want to use some of the activities we discussed today.

parent: Does OM have centres in India or are you planning to open any?

Samuel W Micklus: Hi SwamiN56. If you have the right teacher you have great opportunities, If they ask you to write a report ask her if you can perform a play. If they ask you to list places in a part of the world, ask if you can create a model showing them. Use your creativity, and discuss possibilities with your friends, and give it a try.

Samuel W Micklus: We don't have centers but we do have associations. We are planning to start one in India and hopefully activate it around the entire country.

Rama: Hello Sir, i find that in today's society, we tamper child creativity with the use of electronics and battery operated toys. Do you think this is the case? or do you think these toys still allow children to be creative?

Samuel W Micklus: Some of these actually enhance creativity but the majority detracts from it, You don't want your child resenting you for not letting them to play from time to time, just limit what they are playing and the time they spend. When they have time to fill is when they will go from being bored to using their imaginations.

Cynthia: Does a creative education necessarily mean a decrease in competitiveness amongst students? I know in India, competition can be fierce because all students are vying for the top place in the academic hierarchy that caters to rote memorisation...

Samuel W Micklus: Funny you should ask. I just tried explaining this to a group involved at the top level of education. Competition can and should be invoked in creative endeavors. When we compete we try our best. Ask someone to create the best toy and you will get thousands of great innovative ideas.

Cynthia: At what age should we start reading to our kids? Does it matter if they can understand us or not?

Richa: How can I inculcate a reading habit in my 8 year old? I have lots of books for him, but he seems interested only in gadgets. Thanks.

Samuel W Micklus: I believe in reading to them from the minute you get them home. Even if they cannot process it the act will help you create a lifelong bond with your child. It will be "My time" even when they get older. Bed time at home is My Time with my children and they love it too,

Cynthia: Thank you...

Cynthia: Are foreign languages really that important to a child's creative education?

Anuj Bhatia: Samuel, today's market is flooded with CDs with Nursery Rhymes, games, stories & fables.....are these recommended or would you rather have the parents only read out stories....

Samuel W Micklus: Hi Richa. Find him a book about gadgets. My son loved trucks so we got him books on trucks. He learned that books can be fun and now he reads about a lot of subjects. Good luck!

Rama: Thank you so much Mr. Micklus. I will surely put to practice some of your advice.

Samuel W Micklus: Hi Cynthia, I wish there was more of an emphasis on it when I was young. Learning different languages helps in the learning process but it's not for every child. If it does not come naturally see if they want to put in the effort,. Knowing the languages you will need in life is a must.

bilalgreen: i am bilalgreen n i want to know how can i improve the learning skills of my child in this technological age being in a developing country?

Moderator: Hi we have time for just a couple of questions. Thanks for joining us today.

Samuel W Micklus: Hi Anuj Bhatia. A lot depends on the time you have to spend as a parent. If you have little time then some of these CD's might come in useful. I would not make them the basis of the time they spend at home nor the time they spend learning at home. Eventually your child will think anything on CD or in the "Box" is educational and we know that's not good.

RB: How important it is for a parent to involve his/her child's friends into the process of creative learning?

Samuel W Micklus: Being in a developing country has many great opportunities. The ability to learn is a skill like any other, No matter how you develop that tool in your child you can use it in most any field. Make sure your child has no fear of computers and the like and they will perform remarkably well. Take advantage of what you see developing around you. Ask friends who are in technical fields for their advice. Just don't overwhelm your child.

bilalgreen: my child use to spend lot of time on computer and when asked to learn from books, it irritates him. if he will, for my sake, open his books, it seems that he is not concentrating fully. what should i do in such a condition?

Samuel W Micklus: Hi RB. Involving friends is incidental. Friends might enjoy the process and the experience but the big picture is that you are sharing time in a fun and beneficial way with your child.

Anuj Bhatia: ok....thanks, Samuel...I reposted thinking you missed out

Samuel W Micklus: Hi Bilalgreen. First, take a deep breath since this is not uncommon. What you might want to try is to talk to him in a roundabout way to see what he really is interested in. Then take him to the library because you want to get a book and on the way discuss the subject

he likes, Walk though that section and let him pick a book. He might only read that night but it's a start. Once he is no longer afraid of being bored you've got him reading.

Moderator: On that great note, we close today's chat. Thanks all!