Thursday’s Opening Keynote: Ron Beghetto  
The Beautiful Risk of Classroom Creativity

This morning Ron Beghetto reminded us that we are beautiful risk taskers. The fact that we came to Confratute to learn and bring ideas back home indicates that we are ready to take that leap. He outlined the differences between good risks, which are personally beneficial, and beautiful risks, which have potential benefits to others. Sometimes those beautiful risks are small, like when a child asks a question that can benefit the rest of the class. Sometimes they are large, like when a Three Summers student began a nationwide Invention Convention.

When we strive for classroom creativity, we create opportunities for students to find different and unexpected ways of meeting the pre-established criteria. Instead of boxing them in by deciding every what, how, and outcome, we can firmly ground them with non-negotiable criteria, but allow them room to explore other ways to learn and share their learning.

As we help our students unleash their creativity, we must also help them understand when to be creative and when to follow the given path. Accomplished creators know when creativity is called for and when it is not. By teaching them to understand what is expected, we can help them make their own decisions about whether or not it is worth the risk to push the boundaries in any given situation. Ron reminded us that inviting the unexpected is often not comfortable. We need to build emotional scaffolds for our students so they can gain confidence and willingness to take those beautiful risks. He also cautioned us to guide students to think creatively inside the box. True creativity takes criteria and constraints into account and blazes its own path to the given end goal.

Our minds and perceptions are amazing things, but they can play tricks on us. Sometimes we are unable to see things that are right there, and sometimes we see things that aren’t there. With a few visual exercises, Ron emphasized the importance of continually shifting our perspective so we can avoid missed opportunities and misunderstandings.

Finally, Ron shared some principles to guide us as we respond creatively to mistakes we have made and to problems we are trying to solve. First, we must take some time to sit with uncertainty. Next, engage in possibility thinking. Start those statements with “what if?” and see how many possibilities you can generate. Then prune the possibilities down to the ones that resonate most with you. Think through a “pre-mortem” to problem solve ways each solution could fail to help you work around challenges. Finally, take action. Before you leave Confratute this week, take some time to use this protocol to help you take at least one beautiful risk in your classrooms or communities this year.
Lunchtime Roundtable Discussions
12:15-1:00 P.M. in the Rome Commons Dining Hall

Join us today for our last learning lunch. Today’s topic is Makerspaces with Melissa Thom.

Friday Morning: Ask the Experts!
Rome Hall Cafeteria (ROME)
8:30-9:30 A.M.

Join keynote speakers and strand coordinators for a lively discussion on a question you have over breakfast.

Commuters with lunch only options: Meet Sally or Laurel at the Cafeteria Door at 8:30 A.M. to be let in for this event.

IN 1978....

The largest squid ever caught was taken in Thimble Tickle Bay, Newfoundland. It was 55 feet long and weighed two tons.
Interested in starting an Invention Convention Program in your school, district, or state? If so, please contact Jake Mendelssohn at jmendelssohn@stemie.org and check out the website: http://www.stemie.org

We also recommend the video below:

The value of invention education, according to kids:

http://video.newyorker.com/watch/kid-inventors-tell-all
Dear Confratute Attendees,

I would like to invite you to participate in my grant funded research study by taking a 5-10 minute survey. It is called the Teacher Listening Orientations Questionnaire (TLOQ). The survey items ask educators to rate their agreement or disagreement with certain aspects about how they listen to students during classroom discussions.

By participating, you could enter your name and email address in a drawing for one of three $25 Amazon Gift Cards. Responses are anonymous, and you only have to provide an email address if you enter the drawing. It would be great if you could complete the survey at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions, please let me know. Here is the link or QR code to access the survey: http://uncc.surveyshare.com/s/AYACYMB

Thank you kindly for your time!
Cindy Gilson, Ph.D.
cgilson@uncc.edu
Assistant Professor of Gifted Education
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
The UNCC Institutional Review Board approved this study.
Protocol number #16-05-15

Attention Performers!
All variety show participants, you may sit in the audience during the show. Please come backstage two acts before yours via the door on the right of the stage from the audience. There is a bathroom and a Green Room, as well as a waiting area backstage. The program will be printed Thursday afternoon.