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In the speech “Do schools kill creativity?” Sir Ken Robinson tactfully examines the failure of the current school system to develop and maintain children’s imagination and creativity. Aside from the problem of “academic inflation” caused by the recent increase in value of getting a formal education, Robinson points out with stories cases where people unfit for the regular school system were able to excel in different avenues. For example, a girl who couldn’t keep still and pay attention in school in the 1930s was, once put in a dancing school, able to thrive and eventually become incredibly famous and successful. In addition, Robinson points out that children are inherently creative-that they can try so many new things due to their lack of fear of “being wrong.”

While I agree with Robinson that the school system is flawed in its inability to foster creativity, I disagree with his optimistic view that all children have “tremendous talents.” Concerning the issue that academic institutions tend to produce the idea that the ideal person is a college professor is an issue. Furthermore, I agree that school’s narrow focus on only a certain set of skills and ignoring the many other areas of life is stifling the next generation’s creativity. However, unlike Robinson, who seems to imply that the reason why some people are very successful and or creative and some are not as adults is mainly due to the school system, I believe that there are other factors, such as one’s intelligence or financial environment that influence a child’s success just as much as a broken school system. For example, when Robinson talks about Shakespeare as a child to show that Shakespeare was no different than every other kid, I believe he overlooks the special qualities of Shakespeare, including his work ethic and his latent talent for writing.

While speaking, Robinson used his arms, facial expressions, and speed of voice to engage the audience and signify the switches between seriousness and funny moments. Although Robinson did not move his legs very much and didn’t act very lively on the stage, his precise arm movements synced with his speech to emphasize words he wanted to stress more than compensated for any apparent lack of energy. Furthermore, even the basic movements of his eyebrows and the movement of his head between two groups in the audience made the speech feel more natural and less robotic. Many times, in his speech, he switched between a lighthearted mood where he cracked jokes and made the audience laugh and a serious almost dark tone where he shared his frustration with the education system that he believes ruins many children’s lives. In order to make the transitions between somber and lighthearted, Robinson sped up his voice for comedic moments and slowed his voice almost to a crawl for the dramatic moments. Not only did he change speed, but he also lowered his volume in times of more serious content, which naturally and clearly signals to the audience that he does not think the faulty education system is funny.

I believe this speech is part of the “Top 25” speeches on TED.com, because of the content primarily and secondly the ability of the speaker to push and pull the audience between laughter and somber emotions naturally. Many people today believe that the education system is flawed, especially since many people feel locked in school and or are pressured to go to school just to be career marketable. As a result, a speech confirming those who are struggling in the school system will inevitably draw in many viewers. In addition to good content, the speaker’s ability to bring the audience to laughter with just tone of voice and witty and corny jokes gives the speech an element of casualness which appeals to the common person. Even though he could have neglected humor and made the same points, he would have lost the attention of many people.