

The Role of Creativity in Education

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The role of creativity in education stems far back in history. Although the interest of creativity goes back to Greek, Judaic, Christian, and Muslim traditions, renewed policy interest for creativity in education came about with the failed launch of the satellite "Sputnik 1" in 1957 (Shaheen, 2010). This failure launch of "Sputnik 1" was attributed to a lack of creativity in engineers from Europe, the USA, and other western countries (Shaheen, 2010). The lack of creativity led to the National Defence Education Act in the USA to accept the concept of creativity in education as necessary for the proper survival of society. Since this time, there have been several waves of creativity in education (Shaheen, 2010).

Sustainability

Creativity is fundamental to sustainable development (Sandri, 2013). Focusing on creativity can spark change for sustainability and learner-centred teaching practice in education (Sandri, 2013). Creativity plays an imperative role in assisting innovation and problem solving to address environmental issues; therefore, it is of great importance in education (Sandri, 2013). Pedagogies, based on learner-centred teaching, offer a framework that allows the uncertainty that comes from creative inquiry and is fundamental to creative environments, processes, and outcomes for sustainability (Sandri, 2013).

The nature of global sustainability challenges, including climate change and increasing social inequality, demand that graduates and youth have the capabilities to respond to complex problems (Sandri, 2013). The skills and attributes that are needed to respond to these sustainability issues require the ability to have extensive creative and critical thinking knowledge (Sandri, 2013). Without these crucial forms of thinking embedded throughout education, it becomes a daunting and impossible task to take on such complex sustainability issues (Sandri,

2013). Instead, a shift is happening in the role of learning and creativity in education (Sandri, 2013). In the past two decades, schools across the world have increasingly focused attention on developing employability skills as a response to demands from employers, professional bodies, and governments (Barrie 2006).

To deal with the inherent complexity and uncertainty of sustainability challenges, creative thinking and problem-solving techniques are imperative for innovation, rather than the exercising of repetition of existing practice and ideas (Sandri, 2013).

Economics

From the 1960s to the 1990s, creativity began to be recognized as desirable in education (Derrell, 1963). There was a drive for the inclusion of more creativity into the curriculum, particularly in primary school (Derell, 1963). Promoting creativity in education was designed to address ambitious problems, coping with the fast-changing work, and facing an uncertain future (Shaheen, 2010).

Research suggests that the most dominant current argument for the inclusion of creativity is the economy (Shaheen, 2010). The role of creativity in the marketplace is seen as crucial to assist nations with higher employment, economic achievement and to cope with increased competition (Shaheen, 2010). Education is seen by many to have a role in encouraging creativity to benefit organizations and businesses (Derell, 1963). It is argued that the promotion of collaborative practices and team-work prepares students for future employment (Derell, 1963). Companies across the world are promoting the role of creativity in education so that prospective employees are creative, single-minded, and prepared to be effective in a highly competitive market (Derell, 1963). Research suggests that the role of creativity in education has become

crucial for the development of an "entrepreneurial culture" (Derrell, 1963). It is the reason that creativity cannot be ignored or suppressed through schooling (Shaheen, 2010).

Approaches to Creativity in Education

Formal education represents both the right and the need for creativity (Shaheen, 2010). It consistently has been criticized for creating conformists and stereotypes rather than freely creative thinkers (Shaheen, 2010). Evidence proposes that creativity needs to be fostered by the education system from the early years onward (Shaheen, 2010). Creative thinking is often related to originality, the generation of ideas, and having a wide range of problem-solving strategies (Derrell, 1963). Although this is the goal, evidence concludes that these characteristics of creative thinking are less successful when creativity is maintained and being "taught" through formal education (Derrell, 1963). For specific skills like problem-solving, a student is generally able to learn and improve (Derrell, 1963). However, there is rarely a transfer of learning for more complex activities like generating ideas and using originality (Derrell, 1963).

Primary Education

Specific approaches to education may foster greater creativity than others (Derrell, 1963). Montessori education has been said to be particularly useful in promoting life-long creative skills (Derrell, 1963). Montessori education suggests that self-expression holds the key to enabling an individual's freedom of choice to foster skills like originality and the generation of ideas (Derrell, 1963). Other approaches to creativity in education include that of Reggio Emilia's approach to pre-school education (Derrell, 1963). It is successful in fostering creativity in young children (Derrell, 1963). This approach suggests involving children in multiple creative thinking processes. These included higher-level thinking skills, encouraging the expression of ideas and messages through a wide variety of media, supporting the integration of subject areas through

topics holding meaning and relevance to children's lives, and offering adequate time for the in-depth exploration of specific issues which may arise from spontaneous interest (Derell, 1963).

It is evident teaching a student to become creative is not a simple, structured, or one-way task. The research suggests that teachers need to adopt an efficient approach to enable students to construct their understanding of knowledge, allowing them to express creativity (Derell, 1963). It is important to remember that no one situation in teaching is identical to the next (Derell, 1963). The role of the mentor in fostering creativity is suggested to be of extreme importance (Derell, 1963). The provision of a role model who can provide a learner with an apprenticeship approach to developing creativity is a powerful aid in fostering creativity in students (Derell, 1963).

Global Approach

In Canada, "creative thinking" is outlined as a standard essential learning topic (Shaheen, 2010). A recent upsurge in creativity and education has taken place in Europe, North America, Australia, and East Asian Countries. Sixteen curriculum documents were reviewed to identify the area of arts and creativity in education (Shaheen, 2010). It is found that creativity is included at various educational levels, ranging from early primary years through to higher education (Shaheen, 2010).

Creativity has become renewed with a focus on child-centred and society-centred education (Zimmerman, 2010). Educators cannot anticipate what content will be taught in the next decade. They can teach students skills that will prepare them to find and solve problems that have both local and global import (Zimmerman, 2010). Creativity is approached through a pedagogy that students' will challenge attitudes and beliefs, confront social norms and at the same time, embrace fun and play as essential aspects of self-expression (Zimmerman, 2010).

In the past, creativity has often been trumped by expectations that learning outcomes conform to rubrics in which lesson results are awarded for values for conforming to teachers' preconceived expectations (Zimmerman, 2010). Outcomes are now aiming to embrace unanticipated products and allowing these products to be honoured as a valid expression based on a body of student work that is creative and authentic (Zimmerman, 2010). This type of work has an impact on students' passions, their personal lives and is influenced by visual and social-political environments that surround them (Zimmerman, 2010). Creativity in education is moving towards finding a balance between conventional ways of submitting written work and submitting work more creatively through other formats (Zimmerman, 2010). This, however, is not to discount the importance of having students find and solve problems and learn skills to help accomplish their goals (Zimmerman, 2010). Instead, there are numerous creative processes, real-world applications, and innovative problem-solving strategies that allow students to submit their learning rather than written work (Zimmerman, 2010). These interdisciplinary thinking strategies and creative problem solving are of extreme importance for developing 21st-century skills (Zimmerman, 2010).

Conclusion

The role of creativity in education is ever-changing and essential. Creativity affects the world that we live in today and the world that is becoming. Creativity in education is a necessity for youth to learn how to live sustainably, to express themselves, and learn how to create a better world. The inclusion of creative thinking embedded throughout the years of the school provides students with the knowledge and problem-solving skills that they will use wherever they go. Creative thinking is on the up-rise globally. As educators, we must strive to construct a creative

environment where creative thinking is not only encouraged, but accepting of self-expression and alternate problem-solving skills.

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