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ABSTRACT

The education issue I am addressing in this essay is the importance of creativity in Indian Schools and the guiding research question is to gain understanding of the relevance of creative teaching styles in an Indian classroom context. Economic growth of India has been progressing since the past few decades because of external investments. Unfortunately, the Indian Education system is built upon and still functions on ideologies relevant to times before this massive growth. Hence, the prime purpose of education is not being met – produce citizens capable of contributing for further advancement of the country. Also, students' intellectual capacity building is hindered because of standardised teaching and learning systems. Assessments restrict processing content to retain it as knowledge amidst the need to rote learn for examinations. As a result, students get motivated for the wrong reasons and the ones who do not find it interesting, stop getting concerned about education.

In order to ensure students' intellectual capacity building, creative teaching styles need to be implemented to promote and foster innovative, divergent and creative thinking skills. There needs to be a shift of paradigm from the one practiced centuries ago to the one most relevant in contemporary times. This shift will make certain effective pedagogy for teachers and knowledge retention by understanding concepts through active learning for students. Arts and technology based activities have proven to be most successful to achieve this aim. Importance of creativity in Indian classrooms has been confirmed by many but it's not entirely implemented due to cultural and political reasons. Hence, its relevance in the 21st century should be stressed in order to ensure policymakers do the needful.

INTRODUCTION

Economic development of a rapidly growing economy such as India heavily relies on foreign investment and job creation through the establishment of large-scale manufacturing units. Specifically, exports have contributed to the overall growth of the Indian economy (Rentala, Anand, and Shabam, 2014). On one hand, outsourced products and services are affordable and a high profit-making option for the companies. On the other, jobs created by these companies act as a much-needed source of income for the locals. Exporting essential goods and skill-based occupations involve manufacturing processes and activities that do not require workers to think creatively or divergently. Industrialised systems including assembly line machining operations are part of peoples' daily lives. Hence, it can be concluded that these activities do not need the worker to think outside of their daily constrained line of thoughts. Information held is simply applied.

As a result, a major fragment of such developing countries are still submerged in the Industrial Age and live by Fordist value systems based on hierarchical command structures designed for mass production techniques. Henry Ford's work systems

included a workplace comprising of finely divided workers with minimal skills. Additionally, they were only required to have minimal knowledge and expertise along with a capacity to be disciplined and accept rules (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012).
Now, it has been more than two decades since India has initiated liberalisation policies in 1991 to facilitate the growth of Indian firms by provision of a platform to explore the global markets (Rentala et. al, 2014). Due to growing trends and globalisation in particular, the other part of the population, some that includes the former that has access to technology and information can create jobs for themselves. Nevertheless, amidst the advent of capitalism, most lack appropriate skills required to self-run businesses in a post-Fordist workplace. Moreover, foreign investors now demand labor that can do more than just perform simple operations.

Concurrently, education systems in this era, however, still teach the rudimentary methods based on right or wrong answers, authoritative texts and authoritative teachers. In this contemporary top-down context of unquestionable standards, the purpose of education becomes based more on the desire for social regulation than for a students' intellectual development that results only in the economic development of the country instead of individuals who comprise these countries' populations.

This essay discusses the contention that surrounds the importance of creative teaching styles in Indian classrooms to prepare students for a 21st century workplace of a Knowledge Age economy and ensure students' cognitive skill development. As quoted by Michael Fullan (2001, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a) – "the primary purpose of education is to make a positive difference in the lives of students and help produce citizens who can live and work productively in increasingly dynamically complex societies." Thus, implementation of creative teaching styles as well as inculcation of creative thinking skills for the overall intellectual development of a student has been supported by experts to learn effectively and fulfill the purpose of Education.

Firstly, this paper investigates the implications of the current educational practices on student learning. Following this, it illustrates the need for a paradigm shift from conventional teaching styles to a relevant learner-centered pedagogy. Next, the

impact of various creativity teaching techniques is discussed. Finally, it focuses on the diverse learning needs of a student infused in this type of pedagogy. This, is followed by the implications of creativity based pedagogy for the benefit of children and teachers.

BODY

This section of the essay examines the present-day pedagogies and claims that knowledge received by students is restrictive, constricted and confined. In a study carried out by Sharan (2015) that highlights quality concerns in school education in India, he claims that textbooks were firstly introduced as a cost-effective means to ensure students have access to basic information. However, instead of referring to textbooks during class and study for examinations, guide books were used which had concisely outlined information of the vast content of information provided in textbooks (Sharan, 2015). Besides, information noted by the teacher was copied from the blackboard while the students listened to him/her speak (Bhatia, 2014). Studies by Grouws and Cabula (UNESCO, 2000, as cited in Diwan, 2016) also suggest that textbooks address little new content each year as teachers use it as the only tool of instruction. Therefore, they only provide a base to answer questions in assessment tests and information presented is tedious and confined to only that one book.

Concerned with set texts, teachers' approach to teaching has also proven to affect student learning and development. Singh (2014) has supported Dalton's claim that they might have excellent experience with subject knowledge but do not possess necessary skills for application of pedagogy. Katyal (2005, as cited in Basu, 2014) conceptualises that students perceived teachers to be primarily instructional leaders. Hence, a cemetery model of teaching is practiced, wherein one-sided instructional learning combined with fixed placement of supporting materials and classroom accessories such as blackboards, chairs and desks make the teaching-learning of the subject unattractive and monotonous for the learners (Singh, 2014).

According to the EFA (Education for All) Global Monitoring Report (2015), the result of this phenomenon is connected with diminished interest and commitment to education in hand with struggle to move forward because of low grades. It also

affirms that low quality of learning is leads to increase in school dropouts (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015).

As stated earlier, Singh (2014) also stresses the examination driven focus of teachings in Indian classrooms. One of his classroom observations reported the teacher threaten his/her students to concentrate so as to fare well in tests conducted in the following class. Consequently, children stopped talking but continued to whisper while they copied the content of the board and listen intently. Evidently, children did not make connections of the content with their prior knowledge based understanding of the environment (Singh, 2014). The teacher was able to grab students' attentions by use of transactional commands, followed by students only to do well on the test. Such an approach to teaching supports rote-learning that assesses their memorisation skills as students' minds do not function to process information and convert it to knowledge (Singh, 2014). This was evidenced when a high scorer student was not able to comprehend concepts and apply them in real life situations irrespective of scoring high marks (Singh, 2014).

In relation to the aforementioned top-down educational context, standardised assessment based practices are primarily built on meritocratic testing systems, as I understand, which was essentially introduced to enable fair opportunities for all. Students are rewarded or not according to their demonstrated abilities, not their status in society or their personal connections or possessions. This standardised assessments based system could be a way to ensure an egalitarian social environment. Nonetheless, Kalantzis and Cope (2012) have metaphorically suggested that testing can be considered to be a game and a quite strange game at that. While some people learn to play it well, others do not or cannot.

Regardless, the last few decades of the 21st century has seen an increase in systems-mandated tests, wherein most of the time is spent taking tests by students and majority of the class time is utilised for preparation for tests (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012). The EFA Global Monitoring Report (2015) reported an increase in the number of assessments in developing countries; eight national assessments were conducted in 1990, 35 in 1999 and 64 in 2013 (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015). Nevertheless, digression from the discourse of attending school to score good marks

is considered to be a marker of psychological inability (Kencheloe, 2012). Thus, Cartesian– Newtonian– Baconian science has produced a very restricted view of humans and their potentials as claimed by Kencheloe (2012). Therefore, evidence highlights that excessive importance given to assessments stems from students' ability to move forward in his/her life and teachers to succeed in their careers based on remembering factual information. A valid outcome but not sustainable for the overall growth of individual and country.

Simultaneously, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) reported that India might have increased student enrollment rates but students' attainment of basic skills are widely inconsistent, a validated finding by the official National Achievement Survey of grade 3 students (Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2014, as cited in EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015). Additionally, ASER noted a considerable decrease in mathematics scores and reading abilities (ASER Centre, 2014, as cited in EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015). These are just a few of the many other implications that get reported but go unnoticed in my opinion. Hence, as has been noted, teaching methods do not promote student learning, and due to examination centered learning, students do not perform well in tests, nor develop intellectual capabilities. As a result, they do not contribute to the needs of the modern workplace.

To further understand the role of creativity in classrooms, it is imperative to evaluate the change in classroom environments that foster different kind of learning in each. Kivunja (2014a) highlights the current debate about the classification of the way learning occurs in classrooms into paradigms, which have shifted from one to another over centuries. To cater to the needs of the future (present in this essay's context), it is paramount to devise learning environments which facilitate high-quality learning (Kivunja, 2014a). Hence, understanding these aspects helps us elucidate the role of a teacher, what their students do, complexities of setting up an effective learning environment after consideration of the positive or negative influences of materials, activities, and strategies used (Kivunja, 2014a).

Earliest possible theory related to learning based on the transmission of objective knowledge through practical instruction can be dated back to the early Catholic

Church in Rome in around 500 A.D. (Monroe, 1925, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a). A similar kind of educational set-up existed in the olden times in places known as ashrams in India as well. Seemingly, Killen (2013, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a) contends that direct teacher instruction strategies exist even today in explanation oriented sessions. Relatedness of this contention to Indian classrooms can be deemed appropriate.

The tabula rasa paradigm, also known as the Blank Slate paradigm was argued to be based on the theory of consideration of a child's mind to be empty and completely void of information by Locke (1632-1704, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a). He further goes on to explain that this blank slate then gets impressions as a result of the child's experiences. To remember facts through rote memorisation was the basis of this learning technique (Kivunja, 2014a). Standardised teaching and testing systems in this century also follow this principle as evidenced by Brinkmann (2015).

The next two paradigms introduced towards the mid 20th century were based on an individual's relationship with the environment. Piaget's (1923, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a) idea of a Cognitivist paradigm was supported by the understanding of an individual's learning process to be related to gain knowledge through active meaning construction in relation to his/her on preconceptions of the environment. In like manner, the behaviorist paradigm stressed the relationship between the environment and behaviour. Skinner (1953, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a) postulated that to form connections between stimuli from that environment and related responses is learning.

The social constructivist paradigm, first articulated by Vygotsky (1929, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a) was based on the proposition that social interactions with people, parents, other children, teachers, and mentors lead to a child's cognitive development. In my understanding, it is a sound assimilation of Cognitivist and Behaviorist paradigms with an added social dimension.

The reality in Indian classrooms portrays the opposite to the environment and society related paradigms mentioned above – learning is an individual experience and a non-contextual one at that. Educational practices still operate on transmission and

tabula rasa paradigm ideologies. The ones that came into practice after those in the rest of the world have not even been considered for implementation. Hence, Brinkmann (2015) suggests that there is an urgent need for a shift in ways of learning in Indian classrooms from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach.

Over the years, these paradigms have structurally influenced educational practices, which have guided teaching and learning; specifically, which cater to the demands put forth by the economy in the Industrial age (Kivunja, 2014a). Herein, companies could maximise their profits only through human capital raised on rules of conduct associated with memorisation, specialisation and compartmentalisation (Kivunja, 2014a). However, technological advancements in the last twenty-five years have transformed human existence into a world where we rely heavily on microelectronic technologies including the way 21st century industries and occupations operate (Kivunja, 2014a). As a result, industrial firms had to accept the reality to continue to grow or else shut down as companies competed against each other in the profitability race (Kivunja, 2014a). This is how skills vital to move forward in the 21st century came into existence (Kivunja, 2014a).

Trilling and Fadel (2009, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a) have introduced four key skill-based domains which include the essential skills for 21st century learning and occupations, 1. Core skills such as reading, writing and numeracy to get educated, 2. Learning and innovation skills that include critical thinking, problem solving, communications, creativity and innovation, 3. Specific work operations related and life skills such as collaboration, leadership, adaptability, etc., 4. Digital literacy skills. They proposed that – "In our recently arrived Knowledge Age, our world of connected knowledge work, global markets, tele-linked citizens, and blended cultural traditions, demands a fresh set of skills". Thus, evidence highlights that divergent thinking is a requisite skill to be able to work successfully in a contemporary workplace. Creative teaching styles have also proven to build other necessary life-related career specific skills. The next section provides an explanation of these claims along with suitable pedagogical practices.

Building on from the idea that creative pedagogy is highly relevant in contemporary times, this section explores the idea of a change in learning environment to learn effectively through innovative teaching styles. It is essential because it results in the better cognitive development of students, thus resulting in human capital development.

In relation to the learning paradigms, ones in the pre-21st century might have provided school-leavers with necessary specialised skills applicable to work in highly compartmentalised Industrial Age economies; nevertheless, these skills are insufficient in contemporary workplaces. Prevalent conditions entail that complicated operations run smoothly along with the desire for innovative products and services (P21, 2014, p.24, as cited in Kivunja, 2014b). Ability to critically analyse a situation to solve high-level problems and then come up with innovative solutions through divergent thinking is required in an individual (Kivunja, 2014a).

Kivunja (2014a) suggests that the existing skill-set still continues to be relevant in many fields, they are just learned in a different manner – in 21st century contexts. Ted McCain (2007, cited in Kivunja, 2014a) stresses, confirming Kivunja's contention, the need for a change in instructional approach. The new outlook imbued with effective pedagogies would involve upgradation, enhancement and complementation of social constructivist learning processes. Aiming to establish such a learning space requires a kind of pedagogy that will foster such thinking capabilities. The opinion that creative teaching styles provide an environment for students to build such characteristics has also been backed by many experts. As evidence, creativity in classrooms has proven to foster divergent thinking capabilities through visual activities such as word association with pictures, diagrammatic expression through SWOT analyses, mind mapping, etc. (IBSA, 2009, as cited in Kivunja, 2014b). These tasks enable students to think and look for answers to questions put forth, some with multiple possibilities.

Linked to the former, there is a confirmation of the claim that creativity enhances student performance that leads to academic success (Eckhoff and Urbach, 2008; Freucnd & Holling, 2008; Leahy & Sweller, 2008; Schater, Thum and Zifkin, 2006, as cited in Rinkevich, 2011). This can be justified after reflection on observations that

state meaningful learning is facilitated by creative pedagogy, making it relatable for the students (Palaniappan, 2008; Schater, Thum and Zifkin, 2006, as cited in Rinkevich, 2011). Its impact was evidenced by Bhattacharjea and his team (2011, as cited in EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015) in some rural parts of India through implementation of child-friendly practices to explain concepts through personal association. They saw considerable improvements in students' grades.

Another line of thought on creative teaching demonstrates that innovative teaching styles cater to diverse student needs as they involve the use of arts-related materials or unconventional practices as tools for instruction and learning. These primarily adhere to students' interests and engages them, making it contextual. They are relevant to learning for the digital natives as they are technology based. Furthermore, it also ensures teaching is effective and a reflective practice for teachers because it helps them connect with their students for better comprehension of their pedagogical needs. Creative teaching styles are context-based, as they enable students to connect new information with preconceived ideas, relate novel concepts to real-life situations and retain the newly acquired information as knowledge that can be applied and transferred into other contexts instead of only remember words from textbooks to fare well at examinations (Texas Collaborative for Teaching Excellence, 2007 as cited in Lambert & Cuper, 2008).

Majority of children in schools are believed to be artistically expressive due to their carefree personalities. Simultaneously, they are connected to some form of technology in classrooms and at homes. Therefore, it can be understood that these mediums are familiar and relatable tools for them and computer-enhanced technology-based teaching styles in interest-generating contexts can be used as instruments to create an environment that supports active learning and is conducive to intellectual growth. Hence, inclusion of technology and arts-based activities provide a means for students to make the connection, relate and retain acquired intelligence through the process of active construction (inter-related to one of the earlier century paradigms) while actively engaging with the environment to ensure learning becomes a social experience, plus an individual one during the meaning-making process (Wilson and Peterson, 2006, as cited in Kivunja, 2014a).

Coil (2014) defines art integration into pedagogy as a way for students to comprehend information through an art form. For example, she mentions an activity designed around learning various literary elements through display of their thoughts and ideas after research in the form of drawings, dioramas, murals or paintings. With the help of this activity, firstly, they learned to comprehend concepts through mediums lying in their interest zones, not to mention, it kept them motivated (Coil, 2014). Secondly, creating visual depictions of their understanding of literary elements made them apply theories and concepts gathered or learned after evaluation and synthesis (Coil, 2014). Thirdly, the hands-on approach engaged them to experiment and come up with something authentic, in my opinion. Hence, this instance proves that creative teaching styles motivate students to learn and build required present-day skills developed through analysis and possibility thinking. In relation, employment of music as a method of learning in early-years curriculum has been argued to actively unite affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains, help solve problems, develop creative thinking abilities, learn to be sensitive to others and discipline self to be better (2003, as cited in Hill-Clarke & Robinson, 2004).

Pertaining to evidence which supports the view mentioned above, many are of the opinion of creative pedagogy to be only for people who are inherently artistic. However, Ivcevic (2007, as cited in Rinkevich, 2011) illustrates an alternative perspective, wherein, he asserts that there are different types of creativity, but the everyday creativity that is taught in schools is more related to personal growth and problem-solving skills. Creativity in the form of arts is not creativity if only skills are applied to play an instrument or paint a portrait. In summary, implementation of arts-based creative teaching styles is beneficial for student learning.

Exposure to the computer, the internet, mobile phones, social networking sites, etc. has broadened the world horizon for children in contemporary times (Lambert & Cuper, 2008). Therefore, its significance in today's pedagogy is vital to make certain that their learning is intellectually stimulating. In this technologically saturated world, Ted McCain (2007, cited in Kivunja, 2014a) asserts that assumption of the appropriateness of using technology-based instructional methods and to only equipp students with the latest technology related skills would be fatuous. It is thus necessary to utilise it in the most efficient manner. With access to information of the

entire world on the World Wide Web, teachers can impart first-hand knowledge into students through analysis of works of scholars online with learners (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999, as cited in Lambert & Cuper, 2008). This, further associated with prior knowledge and through means of PowerPoint presentations, can be exercised to reflect on obtained information. Also, use of non-linear multimedia tools (those that include hyperlinks) offers viewers interactivity, control of progress, and choice in their construction of knowledge (Lambert & Cuper, 2008). The strength of such an approach is that it is flexible and can be used according to individual strengths and capabilities, user-friendly because they are accustomed to Google everything and enables self-learning.

There is debate surrounding the effectiveness of arts and technology based classroom practices as teachers believe that students do not take learning seriously if given an opportunity to experiment and choose (Ganimian & Murnane, 2016). However, there is another angle to this debate that suggests that teachers' unwillingness stems from high-stakes set up by the government for student achievement in assessments which render them helpless, thus making them focus exclusively on systems recommended on state assessments (Schacter, Thum and Zifkin, 2006).

Reflective teaching practices enable teachers to access and activate a child's zone of learning that differs based on personal strengths and cognitive styles. Even so, associated with effectiveness, while creative teaching methods have been approved as an advantageous pedagogy, timeframes, and school structures are not altered to allow staff and students to develop a creative environment (Schacter et al., 2006). Hence, it can be concluded that urgent need of this pedagogy has not been realised by policymakers. As a result, teachers are not trained in these areas, ill-equipped to practice creative instruction and are not supported by the society if they want to practice student-centered teaching styles (Schacter et al., 2006). A study carried out by Schacter et al. reported that on average, each of the creative teaching behaviours assessed occurred less than one time over the course of eight different lessons that took place in a span of approximately one year. Therefore, evidence highlights the actuality and based on this actions need to be taken to ensure implementation of creative pedagogy in schools.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, this essay has shown that implementation of creative teaching styles in an Indian context is of utmost importance due to the ineffectiveness of current educational practices. Developing 21st century skills is vital to excel in current workplaces. Some parts of India are still living by Industrial age value systems; nevertheless, progressive nature of the economy demands its citizens to be independent thinkers capable of innovation and modernisation. Furthermore, a shift from an instructional teacher-centered pedagogy is required to ensure students' intellectual development. Creativity in classrooms is directly associated with active-learning through social and varying medium based interactions, to make learning learner-centered. Particularly, engagement and motivation for students from diverse cognitive and learning abilities.

Numerous policies encircling rights of every child to get educated, for example, the Education for All initiative by UNESCO are passed by policymakers. However, if teacher effectiveness interconnected with the motivation of children to get educated is not taken care of, these Acts seem useless in my opinion. The problem has to be understood and dealt with from the root. Yes, access to education is an issue in India, but schools do exist in the majority of rural areas, and if learning is projected as something beneficial and fun to the mass, there will be no need to incentivise education to propel them to go to school.

To conclude, this assignment has addressed some significant issues which show that creative teaching styles can help teachers tackle assessment based pressure, motivate students and ensure intellectual development. Consequently, this pedagogy is the most relevant to create citizens that can contribute to the overall growth of his/her country in the 21st century.

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