

ASSIGNMENT 1 PART 2:
Issue: Importance of Creativity in Classrooms
PRECIS

Background, Nature and Significance:

According to studies and personal experience, standardised teaching practices that test students' memorisation skills instead of necessary practical ability have led to schools killing the motivation of students to get educated. Based on E. Paul Torrance's (1995) longitudinal studies, children tend to become less curious, more cautious and less creative when they continue attending school. The curriculum, taught through mechanised teaching styles has made the learning confined to only the subject, restricted towards exploring beyond the content and constricted to think in a certain manner.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences by Howard Gardner(1983,1993a), based on a human beings' cognitive styles and personal strengths states that there are eight types of intelligences- Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Mathematic- Logical, Bodily- Kinesthetic, Visual-Spatial, Musical, Naturalistic and Verbal-Linguistic.

In order to ensure that a teachers' teaching styles are not catered only towards one type of intelligence and every students' learning styles are met, teachers' are suggested to enhance their teaching styles. A possible means to establish this is introducing creativity in classrooms through creative teaching styles. Current research shows that creativity enhances learning by making it more meaningful than simple rote-learning (Palaniappan 2008; Schacter, Thum and Zifkin 2006).

In the future, when faced with unidentified problems with unidentified solutions our ability to think is going to prove to be most crucial. Where information will be readily available it will be our capacity to think creatively and effectively that will be considered valuable (Robert Reich, former US Secretary of Labour, 1991). Thinking creatively and effectively involves:

- Divergent thinking
- Possibility thinking
- Thinking out of the box
- Thinking something original

Introduction of creativity in classrooms builds such skills in students.

Reasons for absence of Creativity in classrooms:

- Ill-equipped teachers: Torrance and Safter (1986) argue that teachers are not equipped to meet the needs of students in terms of creativity, because teachers do not appear to know how to initiate, conduct or evaluate creativity themselves.
- Perceived time constraints: Timeframes and structures are not altered to allow staff and students to develop a creative environment.
- Challenges to the status quo: A common challenge is teachers' attitude towards not valuing creative or non-confirming behaviours promoted through creativity (Beghetto 2006; Freund and Holling 2008; Scott 1999).

- Viewing creative practices as extras: Beghetto (2007) found that teachers viewed creativity as one more responsibility or as something extra. (Baghetto 2007; Fleith 2000; Kim 2008; Makel 2009; Schater, Thum and Zifkin 2006)

In relation to this, based on the study by Schater, Thum and Zifkin (2006), teachers claim that high-stakes accountability has limited their capacity to teach creatively, because standards and state assessments dictate what and how to teach. The majority of teachers, therefore, feel that to increase student achievement, they must focus exclusively on tested standards, and devote little time to subjects and teaching strategies that do not appear on the state assessment.

Employing Creativity in Classrooms:

Increasing creativity in teaching begins with teacher education. Additionally, building creative teachers' characteristics such as sensing and responding to the different moods of students from class to class (Jennifer L. R. 2011). Creating a unique and customised environment for meaningful exchange of knowledge among all individuals in a learning context is creative teaching (Jennifer L. R. 2011). Hence, the teaching styles should incorporate external elements (stories with characters and places) or materials (such as digital or visual aids) to support practice. These enable children to understand and remember concepts more easily than a textbook presentation (Butzow and Butzow, 1989). Schater, Thum and Zifkin (2006) have recommended a framework to promote creativity in classrooms:

- Explicitly teaching creative thinking strategies
- Providing opportunity for choice and enquiry
- Encouraging intrinsic motivation
- Establishing a learning environment conducive to creativity
- Providing opportunities for imagination and fantasy

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