CHAPTER 4

HOW TO PROMOTE CREATIVITY BY TEACHING CREATIVELY

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UNDERSTANDING CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

What is creativity? Who is creative? Where does it originate? Who judges creativity? What is the role of schools in the development or discouragement of creativity? The concept of creativity aroused hundreds of questions and attracted considerable attention, especially in the 21st century. Although it has always been seen as an important characteristic of human beings, the increase in scientific studies regarding creativity dates backs to the midst of the 20th century. J. P. Guilford's famous APA Presidential Address in 1950, is considered to be the milestone for it.

Creativity is a wide-ranging topic that is important at both individual and societal levels and has effects in various disciplines. The sophistication of the concept gave birth to several definitions. Traditionally creativity has been defined as having two components; originality and appropriateness (e.g., Barron, 1995; Guilford, 1950; Ochse, 1990; Sternberg & Lubart, 1996). Originality is the production of new or different ideas/products. Repetition does not exist in the realm of creativity. Nevertheless, coming up with solely original ideas does not guarantee creativity; appropriateness is required as well. Imagine a student answering the question 13x13 as 369, this answer might be original for the specific class, but it is far from being creative as it is not appropriate. Starko (2010) clarifies the term appropriateness by stating that "an idea or product is appropriate if it meets some goal or criterion".

The relation between originality and appropriateness has been formulated by Simonton (2013) as Creativity = Originality x Appropriateness; by the rules of math if one of the variables in the equation is zero then the result will be zero too, meaning it cannot be creative. Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow (2004), elaborated this equation and pointed out the importance of *context* in creativity. The creativity of an idea or product depends on the social, cultural, and historical context that it was produced. The resulting equation was upgraded to Creativity = (Originality

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to create a perfect balance between the demands of the academic content of curriculum and their expressions of creative behavior. To teach creatively, a teacher must possess creative characteristics like openness, flexibility, sensible risk-taking, tolerance for ambiguity, curiosity etc.

Creative teaching is valuable and can be seen as a top-notch quality for teachers yet the realization is not that easy. Teachers who teach creatively believed that it takes more time and energy compared to the traditional way (Mullen, 2017). Moreover, as creative teaching is more demanding and teachers are constantly facing time pressure to finalize their content within a pre-determined time-range, they may feel investment in creative teaching is useless. The standard measurement and evaluation approaches constitute another problem because they are mostly focused on single right answers and this is not the aim of creative teaching. Thus, teachers may think that focusing creative teaching in classroom may decrease their success in local or national exams.

To sum up, creative teaching and teaching for creativity both have their specific challenges and constraints. Nevertheless, the effort that will be put on achieving those goals will not only help teachers and their students but also the societies we are living in. Human civilization has risen on the shoulders of creative people, because of that maintaining creative climates in classrooms and fostering our future generations' creative potentials should be the ultimate goals of education.

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