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Research Article

Commenting on Creativity at Primary Educational Stage in Pakistan: Curricula and Educational Policies of Multiple Countries as Evidence

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Abstract

Although creativity is necessary at all educational stages, this article forcibly says that it is inevitable at the primary educational stage. This article is of commentary type that comments on how creativity is essential in primary education. This article further proves that creativity and education cannot be separated but are concomitant for several reasons discussed in this article. It also explains why, in the Pakistani educational system, creativity has been ignored so far. It also informs the Pakistani educational system that they should embrace the critical concept of creativity. Further, various countries' educational policy documents have also been arrayed to show the strong evidence that creativity also needs to be placed in the Pakistani curriculum and educational system, especially at the primary level. It also draws some messages from past literature and leaves some blank spaces for future researchers.

Key Words: Commentary, Creativity, Primary Educational Stage, Curricula and Educational Policies, Evidence

What is a Commentary type of Article?

According to Majumder (2020), scholarly journals are published in multiple formats; some academic literature includes the original study, while some researchers take the review studies and critically analyze them to extract conclusive remarks. Any researcher who comes in research publications should also discover some other research formats, for example, the commentary articles (Majumder, 2020). Commentary articles are the type of articles that critically comments on articles, books, or reports that published in the past or these types of commentaries draws attention to a specific phenomenon and

provides literary proof that why the author was interested in it and in which way it could help the readers (Majumder, 2020).

Historical overview of creativity

Theories about creativity come from far history (Craft, 2001). Ryhammer & Brodin (1999) believed that creativity comes from the notion of inspiration and is based on the traditions of Muslims, Greek, Judaic, and Christians and said that the higher power produces it. Jeffrey (2006) stated that the latest interest that attracted creativity falls in the 90's, although according to Cropley (2004), it is as old as Plato's age. This interest in creativity tends to develop (Turner-Bisset, 2007) in different Western nations, such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Shallcross, 1981; Feldman & Benjamin, 2006). During the romantic era in Europe, originality, insight, and creative genius were highly valued (Craft, 2001). When people wondered what inspired creativity, it was at the end of the 19th century (Craft, 2001).

The link of creativity with primary education

Creativity is strongly related to both; humans (Ryhammer & Brodin, 1999) and schools (Walberg, 1988). Because at one side newness and originality is a human characteristic (Ryhammer & Brodin, 1999) while on the other side schools are the appointed places that encourage creativity not only in the elites but in the ordinary students as well (Walberg, 1988). It is also said that creativity should be included in education from the early years of children's schooling (Craft, 1999). Further, the early years of education should be preferred for national success than university education (Walberg, 1988). Primary education for the children is more important as it develops the children in this initial stage and develops them for their life (DfES, 2003); thus, if we focus on children's creativity in this primary educational stage, it will be more effective. According to DfES (2003), primary education is vital in children's lives because it shapes their personality for a complete life. The child enjoys creativity in various ways and develops self-confidence, emotional, and social maturity because the primary educational stage is the learning tool for children (DfES, 2003). This means that creativity is significantly embedded in the primary educational stage; therefore, this link cannot be ignored (Shaheen, 2010). Besides, if creativity got an opportunity in education, it could address various problems (Shaheen, 2010), such as the uncertain future and the world's fastest changes (Parkhurst, 1999). This importance made creativity a debatable topic (Dickhut, 2003) and a core aspect of education (Craft, 2005) at the primary stage. In reality, it is said that educational institutions ought to encourage creativity from the early years onwards (Craft, 1999) and that elementary education could be essential for national development than university education (Craft, 1999; Walberg, 1988). This increased interest in creativity brought the agenda (Brundrett, 2007) that creativity must be placed in primary education. Sinlarat (2002) proposed that UNESCO states that learning should be modified in the following way:

1. Learning how to perform creatively
2. Finding how constructively to work

Creativity in views of Policymakers

For policymakers, the top-listed problem is the economy (Shaheen, 2010), while creativity has a more significant and decisive role in boosting the economy (Burnard, 2006). Due to this reason, a value has been given to creativity (Dickhut, 2003) ever since the policymakers have shown greater interest in it (Craft, 2005). So, if we develop the children's creativity during their early schooling years, it will prove that we are building the human capital, which will be considered a base for nations' wealth (Walberg, 1988). This made creativity a core aspect of education (Craft, 2005; Dickhut, 2003) in policymakers' eyes. Creativity also helped the nations in achieving economic development and stunning employments (Davies, 2004). It also helps the countries to prevail the competence (Shaheen, 2010); therefore, Poole

(1980) stated that creativity could not be crushed and/ or overlooked in schools. According to Craft (1999), creativity should be considered the principal skill of life and should be part of education because creativity development gives rise (Parkhurst, 1999) to the advancing and sustaining future (Parkhurst, 1999).

Further, if the nations require economic development (Craft, 2005), then they have to produce the educated mass (Shaheen, 2010) for which primary creative education is necessary (Jeffrey, 2006). However, the criteria for nations' educational achievements are now changing (Wilson, 2005), and that criterion is creativity which means that creativity is the backbone of educational accomplishments (Craft, 2001).

As we saw from the above discussion, creativity has a unique position in education; therefore, the educational departments should come forward and renovate their resources, attitudes, and understandings about creativity to get it valued (Turner-Bisset, 2007). Since then, it has been evident that creativity needs to be incorporated in primary education; thus, education strategies have been implemented around the world to incorporate creativity with awareness (Dickhut, 2003). An official plan has been proposed to develop schooling (Burnard, 2006; Wilson, 2005) for creativity.

Policies and Curricula of Multiple Countries Regarding Creativity: An Evidence

In various developed countries' policy documents and curricula, the concept of creativity has been taken place, which shows that creativity is not only a mirage (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Hussain, 2004) but is an essential matter for which action has been taken (Shaheen, 2010). The connotation about these countries' policy documents and curricula are as follows.

1. In Florida (USA), the application of creativity strategies is one of the schools' significant objectives (Treffinger, 1996).
2. ACARA (2009) reported that the most thrilling aims for young people in Australia are to make them creative.
3. In the second world war, the Japanese involved creativity cultivation in their educational curriculum (Shaheen, 2010).
4. In Singapore, the primary curriculum has taken steps to improve students' imagination (Tan, 2006), and creativity is considered among the eight core skills (INCA, 2009). Also, the Ministry of Education of Singapore states that they want their young people to be creative (Tan, 2013).
5. Since 2001, creativity has become an essential aspect of Chinese education, and its growth has become a priority (Vong, 2008).
6. The education policy plan in Hong Kong involves creativity (Fryer, 2003), and at the same time, higher-order thought skills are being introduced in pre-school, primary and secondary education, where creativity growth is granted top priority (Fryer, 2003).
7. Turkish education also considered how creativity should be idealized. It means that the Turkish curriculum has accepted the awareness about creativity (Oral, 2006).
8. In the 1990s, several policy documents Various documents which were related to the policy of the UK home countries showed the significance of creativity (Craft, 2001). In addition, the White Paper in 1997 showed a report that its main aim was to identify the talents that they have for creativity (Craft, 2001). Another report by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999) was built, which acknowledged the UK government's views that creativity was relevant to schools (Craft, 2005; Jeffrey, 2006).

9. Unlocking creativity is a paper that is called a policy paper in Ireland. It also has put greater focus on creativity which is proof that creativity must be inculcated in education in Ireland (Robinson, 2001).
10. The Cultural Policy Document of Scotland declared that the devolved government should have the confidence to embrace creativity as the most critical force for individual transformation and social vision. The development of creativity should be the primary enterprise of our society and education. The Policy Statement says that Scots' creativity from the classroom to the boardroom is the advantage we need in a competitive world. We must establish the conditions for the fostering of innovation in the arts, sciences, business, and/or business since creativity is valuable in education as well as in culture. The cultural field can become the national dynamic of the artistic urge that can represent all these regions (Scottish Executive, 2004).

These documents formed the framework for recent policy discussions (Craft, 2005) in which the British Government replied to discussions on artistic education to solve the fiscal, technical, and social demands of the 21st century (Loveless, 2002). Another paper calling for innovation in primary education was the National Primary School Plan in the United Kingdom (Hayes, 2004). The UK Certificate and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has promoted innovation and included creativity in each subject in the National Curriculum (Jeffrey, 2006; Turner-Bisset, 2007). Creativity in the Foundation Stage Program was the focus of the curriculum in England (Talboys, 2004; Art, 2003; QCA, 2009) and The National Curriculum describes six core skills that involve creativity (QCDA, 1999). This is known to be one of the capabilities that are universal and rooted in primary education. These activities have placed creativity at the center (Feldman & Benjamin, 2006).

Conclusion

As mentioned in policy documents of various countries that each country has put a greater focus on creativity in their curricula, especially at the primary level of education, and this has also reported from the literature as is witnessed in this paper. For an emphasis, the authors had laid the names of countries that put the focus on creativity in education. This paper also proved that creativity is also the criterion of economic competition in developed countries (NESTA, 2002) which showed that underdeveloped countries like Pakistan might face hurdles in the economy if not focused on creativity. Does this imply that Pakistan does not want to succeed economically, does not require a different form of the workforce, and does not need the innovation that has been seen in developing countries? Creativity remains overlooked in Pakistan, while in developed countries, educational theory and practice rely on enhancing students' creativity, especially at the primary educational stage. Integrating creativity in education is a critical necessity (Oral, 2006) for Pakistan to mold their possible orientations towards economic and educational fields. Speaking of Asian nations, Sinlarat (2002) believes that Asians are buyers of Western goods, culminating in the lack of self-identity, resources, and self-independence.

Implications

This commentary article gives the following implications to Pakistani policymakers and curricular experts.

1. There is a need for Pakistan to become creative because creativity is essential for self-identity and self-independence.
2. Educational methods should primarily aim for creativity to have a real impact on society.
3. To push in the direction of globalization, Pakistan must change itself for the creative way of life, which would develop Pakistan into a creative and prosperous society.

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4. When Pakistan refuses to copy creativity and information from other nations, then it will indeed be developed.
5. More study is needed to tell what advanced countries are doing in terms of creativity and education and what Pakistan will need to do now.

Creativity is a global concept, and the need for it in education is recognized internationally to address the existing challenges, which suggests that Pakistan must use creativity in primary education.

Contribution of the Authors in current paper

All the authors contributed in various parts of this paper. Dr. Muhammad Kamran initiated the idea, worked on it and finalized the whole paper. Dr. Tanzeela Arooj supervised the whole process and made the possible corrections by adding some new literature and concepts. Dr. Waqar Un Nisa Faizi refined the language of the paper and refined the literature. She also added policy documents. Mr. Fazal Hayat introduced some new areas in the topic and set the format of the paper according to the journal guidelines. He also gave the implications based on current scenario.

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