Creativity and the Self:
A Higher Educational Praxis for Responsive Learning

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter conceptualizes the approach to nurturing creativity in higher education. The chapter begins by describing the creative self based on personality theories discussed in the creativity research literature. This chapter then engages in the discussion of the contradiction between the concept of the creative self and some aspects of the current educational policies in Malaysia, in particular the implementation of outcome-based education (OBE) as outlined by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). This chapter ends with the discussion of proposing the activity theory as a framework for creative education.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to be creative is crucial for the future. The way that creativity is now understood sets it apart from the idea of intelligence. Therefore, rather than emphasizing the kind of concrete information that is typically found in the natural sciences like engineering, biology, and mathematics, education that attempts to cultivate creative talents should instead focus on developing ideational skills. Consequently, the goal of this chapter is to conceive a responsive learning environment that uniquely serves educational institutions that aims to encourage creativity.

The fact that students and their educational environments work together to nurture creative skillsets highlights the significance of conceiving creativity in a way that is consistent with present educational policies. It is possible to gain insights into a theoretical understanding and suggestive implementation strategies that, in turn, can be the praxis of a responsive learning environment that emphasizes creativity by conceptualizing creative education within these two extremes: 1) the individual or self, and 2) the current educational policies.

What is Creativity?

The definition of creativity and the various perspectives on it should be discussed first. The definition of creativity is the production of something new and appropriate (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). From the extremity of business and innovation to the preservation of cultures, it is advantageous to society. Additionally, creativity is a crucial component of learning since it helps pupils come up with fresh approaches to issues.

Nowadays, creativity research has its own field. Before the field was founded, many people conjectured about the special talents of some people in invention and creation. The study by Guilford, in which he suggests divergent thinking as a thought process related with ideation, is one of the cornerstones of creativity research (Guilford, 1956). He makes the case that concepts, and ideas can have literal or symbolic manifestations. Guilford's seminal study was able to spark interest in the study of creativity by contrasting its reliance on ideas with other mental functions such as intelligence.

Fulfilment is one of the main issues in studies on creativity. This query can shed light on what distinguishes creative people from others. Understanding creativity is crucial in a setting where intelligence is valued so that its development can be examined objectively, and any misunderstandings may be avoided. The relationship between intellect and creativity is still up for question, as data from studies on The Threshold Theory suggests that there is no correlation between creativity and intelligence for IQ scores above 120 (Runco & Albert, 1986; Weiss et al., 2020). Furthermore, by defining creativity within the context of the individual, creative curriculums can avoid applying educational theories that is unrelated.

Currently, creativity research is a discipline with well-defined sub-interests. Researchers have claimed that research on creativity should be considered from two perspectives to comprehend why some people are more creative than others. One perspective of creativity, *the Big-C and Small-C* of creativity is proposed (Simonton, 2017). The *Big-C* is used to characterize eminent individuals who are experts in a certain field, which led to the notion that creativity is contextual. *Small-C* on the other end address everyday problems. Another perspective according to Rhodes, creativity may be perceived from four different aspects, known as the "4-Ps of creativity". These aspects include, namely, 1) the process of thinking, or simply *Process*, 2) the impact on the surroundings, or *Press*, 3) the results of creative endeavors, or *Products*, and 4) the viewpoint of the individual, or *Personality* (Rhodes, 1961). This demonstrates that creativity is a rich body of knowledge that can answer a variety of requirements and queries. The primary goal of this chapter, according to the authors, is to address creativity in the context of the self (*personality*) and its responsive learning concepts in higher education.

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN MALAYSIA

In the 1990s, Malaysia's educational policies were focused on developing human capital to deal with the rising urbanization, industrialization, and globalization of the world. Since most creative disciplines

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