

CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO DEVELOP TEACHERS' CREATIVE ABILITY

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Abstract

This paper is focused on the teachers' creativity development approaches in view of its numerous benefits in developing teachers' creative ability. This involves an examination of creativity development approaches to be used, the need to develop teachers' creative ability, the expected problems in this direction and some measures to be taken for ensuring effective and meaningful teachers' creativity development for teachers' creative ability development.

Creativity is the ability to create new and valuable ideas that lead to the production of work and service that are appropriate to the task constraints. It is a way to generate something tangible characterized as being imaginative showing inventiveness and original. Mgboro (2012) observed that the transformation of society is consequent on creativity, innovation and in the promotion of organizational business and social changes. For him creativity is a complex multi-faceted process which has little conceptual clarity. Similarly, Hornby (2010) noted that creativity involves the use of skill and imagination to produce something new while Kaufman and Sternberg (2010) described it as innovation, quality and relevance .

In his own contribution, Feldman (1988) in Obiajulu (2014) stated that creativity was rooted in the desire for creative change i.e. the conscious desires to make a positive change in something real. It is at the centre of man's ability to adapt and adjust to his environmental changes. In line with this, Alkire (2002) noted that creativity is useful in industries where technical and scientific innovation can provide employment and broaden the economic base; and where individuals want to think

differently in order to create a new society and look at alternatives for further development.

In trying to explain the concept more Craff (2001) identified two kinds of creativity as high and ordinary creativity, For him, high creativity is the creative activities of extraordinary talented person while ordinary creativity is more relevant to the problems of ordinary people including students. Hence the National Advisory Committee on Creative Education NACCE indentified the following four characteristics of creative processes:

- They involve thinking or behaving imaginatively
- This imaginative activity is purposeful, that is, it is directed to achieve an objective.
- These (creative) processes must generate something original.
- The outcome must be of value in relation to the objectives.

Source: Ofsted (2003)

On the other hand Ofsted (2003) creativity studies are categorized into four main categories which include:

Person- *traits, abilities, motivational and affective states that are corrected with creativity (Amabile, 1990)*

Process- *cognitive and social dynamics that determine the generation expression and acceptance and adaption of new ideas (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).*

Pressure- *In the social and material environment that enhance or inhibit creativity, for instance, access to resources, organizational structure (Anabite, 1990)*

Product- *Creative outputs like publications and art work.*

Applying to the area of education, creativity is central in educational development. Thus, successful education depends on the confident and competent teachers who are innovative and creative. Such a teacher is a creative teacher; he is original, resourceful, imaginative, shows inventiveness in dealing with teaching and has not only the skill and ability to create something new but also capable of dealing with problems by producing a solution to them. Thus, these teachers' mental abilities should be nurtured, protected and encouraged through promotion of the diffusion of creative acts in our education system. To this effect, the teachers' creative development should be the major priority here. This paper critically looked into ways for helping teachers develop their creative ability.

Need To Develop Teachers Creative Ability

Teachers need creative training in order to develop their creative ability. Studies have revealed the importance of creative development to teachers in relation to

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teaching and learning. Thus teachers are the key examples from whom learners see, learn and practice creativity.

Development of creative ability ensures that teachers are able to generate different alternative solutions to a given educational problem. Thus, it is an important skill teachers use to reason, make decisions, add meaning and value to educational issues through creative research. Creative research focuses on diverse areas like conceptual (seeking to explain what the concept is about with a view to bringing out clarity in the field), developmental (problem definition, problem solving, divergent thinking, tolerance for ambiguity and cognitive flexibility) areas (Rinco, 2004). For him, it has been examined as economic driver because of the role in innovation and entrepreneurship.

In her own contribution, Obiajulu (2014:368) outlined the following as the creative acts required of creative primary school teachers of basic science and technology. They include:

Assembling, selecting and using of the available resources for teaching; creativity in improvising instructional materials and equipment; creativity in the development of science instructions and activities;

Making creative mediation between the primary basic science and technology curriculum and the developmental levels of his pupils and their environment;

Adapting activities in the text books to special classroom environment and pupils needs;

Making a conscious effort in making a positive change in the pupils;

Coping with classroom management problems; motivation of the pupils; objective evaluation of his teaching and popularization of science.

In the same vein, creativity development gives teachers ability to generate new ideas for transforming educational issues by:

- Changing educational products, services and processes.
- Making adequate use of educational resources to give the learners a firm grasp of the subject for achieving educational goals.
- Finding explanations to natural objects, phenomena and their consequent educational implications, and
- Making concerted efforts to get learners interested in the lesson so as for them to learn with ease.

Studies revealed that teachers need creativity for effective teaching. Thus, effective teaching is achieved through adequate teaching materials among others, lack of these

teaching materials calls for improvisation which only creative teachers can provide. Improvisation is a skill that most teachers quickly master, whether it is searching for inexpensive or free materials for the classroom, substituting everyday material for expensive laboratory equipment, or incorporating activities into the curriculum (Sussman, 2000).

Creative development enriches teacher's creative abilities such as mental health, self effort, encouragement, curiosity, interest and determined hardwork for investigation and creativity. Such a teacher is able to create some curiosity safe environment, a situation in which Ango (1987) in Obiajulu (2014) observed that the child will feel secured enough to abandon the inhibitions like cultural beliefs, taboos which he has built up against his own natural curiosity.

Creativity demands hardwork, therefore a creative teacher is also a hardworking teacher who also promotes creative problems solving in his teaching by:

Encouraging learners to believe in their creative ability

Identifying young people's creative abilities

Fostering creativity by developing some of the common capacities and sensitivities of creativity such as curiosity, recognizing and becoming more knowledgeable about the cognitive process that help to foster creativity;

Providing opportunities to be creative, a hand-on approach NACCE, in Okafor (2014)

Creativity Development Approaches For Developing Teachers Creative Ability.

Teachers' creative ability can be developed through the following ways which include:

- **Role Model:** According to Sternberg and William (1997) role model is one of the most important factors for the development of creativity. For them, the teachers who understudy notable creative teachers in their field will end up developing their creative potentials. This is in line with the view of psychologists that creative process is educable
- **Brainstorming:** This according to Okafor (2014) elicits not only intellectual excitement and linear thinking but also cognitive flexibility which is essential in creative problem solving. To support this claim, he further stated that the brain functions to creatively plan, solve problems, make decisions, synthesizes and even evaluate issues.
- **Creative Mediations:** This involves the desire for creative change, ie the conscious desire to make a positive change in something real. Thus any teacher with a strong desire to bring about changes through his teaching will go an extra mile to make creative mediations in his instructions.
- **Heuristic Ideation:** For Okafor (2014) this encourages participants to force together two unrelated concepts to discover novel relations that enhance problem –

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solving and creativity. Here teachers are encouraged to discover things by themselves in solving problems by finding practical ways of dealing with the problems and at the same time learn from their past experience.

- Creativity developed within the three components which are people, field and domain. This, therefore, implies that the teacher's creativity is developed within his area of study or specialization as the field and school where he is learning as the domain, while the role of the school as the learning place is to foster teacher's creativity effectively. In her framework, Amabile in Obiaulu (2010) proposed the following theories for the development of creativity to include:

- **Creativity-Relevant Skills:** These include appropriate cognitive style personality trait, conducive work style and knowledge of strategies for generating novel ideas. In line with this, Anjo and Csikzentmihalyi, in Obiajulu (2010) identified such attributes as self efforts, hardwork, interest and curiosity as some of the creativity-relevant resources the creative teachers can tap from.

- **Domain Specific Knowledge:** this is a very significant factor in creativity development. It includes factual knowledge, technical skills and special talents of the teachers in the domain such as teachers' technical know how on the subject.

- **Task Motivation;** Here Amabile proposed that intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity while extrinsic motivation is detrimental to the development of creativity. Obiajulu, 2010). In developing intrinsic motivation, promoting a playful attitude in the environment is very important. Thus, teachers who are able to maintain playfulness may continue to focus on the interest and enjoyment they derived from the task. These teachers are more likely to keep their intrinsic motivation, even under external constraints.

- **Information communication technology (ICT):** this method involves developing specific teaching and learning skills such as dynamic interaction among the teachers, metacognition, collaborative learning and conceptual blending (Flach, 1990). This is because for him creativity focuses on problem definition, divergent thinking and cognitive flexibility which in the words of Mgboro (2012) developed and nurtured using ICT. For him, ICT based content, services and pedagogies will be a catalyst for creative problem solving, discovery learning by doing, experiential learning and critical thinking.

Challenges of Teacher Creativity Development Training

Teacher's creativity development training are affected by many pertinent problems which include:

- **Lack of teacher re-training programme:**

Teacher re-training programme is necessary for their creativity development. Until recently, there is no occasional lectures, exhibitions, workshop, seminar, etc to train teachers for developing their creativity ability in Nigeria education sector.

Consequently teachers divergent thinking abilities are not properly fostered resulting in their inability to adapt activities in the textbooks to classroom environment and learners needs.

- **Lack of task motivation to teachers:**

Teachers are not motivated in order to put in their best effort in creativity development as in the view of Aminabile (1996) that intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity development.

- **Lack of building of self efficiency:**

Every teacher has the capacity to create and experience the joy of creating new ideas. Thus every teacher must be helped to believe in his/her own capacity to create new ideas. Ango (1983) and Csikzentmihalyi (1996) seem to support this idea by stating that curiosity, interest, self effort, courage, and determined hard work are some of the cornerstones in science learning, scientific investigation and creativity.

- **Lack of Time;**

Due to lack of time teachers are always under pressure to complete the scheme of work and as such may not have enough time to nurture, protect and encourage creativity. Studies have proved it that teachers are creative when they spend time and energy to understand what creativity entails and put it in work.

- **Poor Funding:**

Due to poor funding, schools, according to Okafor (2014) find it very difficult to provide adequate funds for the procurement of instructional equipment and materials that are needed for hands-on and minds-on activities for creativity and inventiveness.

- **Certification:**

The over emphasis on paper qualification (certificate) in Nigeria is also a serious set back on creativity (Okafor, 2014). For him, no matter how much one is able to utilize ones learning in solving personal and societal problems, the society may not recognize one without appropriate certificates in relevant fields of learning.

Conclusion

This paper has emphasized the importance of teacher creative training in view of its numerous benefits to the development of teachers' creative ability. It also highlighted some of the creativity development approaches for helping teachers develop their creative ability, and some of the constraints to teachers creativity development training in Nigeria. Finally, an attempt was made to suggest some strategies for developing meaningful and effective teachers creative ability training.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were made to deal with the challenges confronting teacher creativity development in Nigeria education sector:

- There should be re-training programmes for teachers to develop their creative ability. Thus, occasional lectures, exhibitions, workshops, seminars etc. should be organized for the teachers.
- Structural activities for the development of divergent thinking abilities and creative capabilities of teachers should be incorporated into our school curriculum.
- Teachers should be encouraged and motivated to deal with the challenges of creativity. Thus, teachers who exhibit a kind of creativity in his/her teaching should be specially rewarded by accelerated promotion, certificates of merit, etc.
- Teachers should model creativity and inventiveness in their teaching methods in order to develop their own creative and inventive ability including that of their students. Longshaw (2009) supported this view by maintaining that students develop creativity when teachers model creativity/and inventiveness.
- There should be inclusion of creativity training programmes as part of the school creativity such as brainstorming and problem solving (Mcgregor, 2001).
- Creativity development must be multifaceted taken into account the cognitive, affective, motivational, personal and social factors and these must permeate the curriculum.
- Teachers should be encouraged to continue their creative thinking both after the lessons and in real-life teaching.
- Programme should be established to induce modeling effects in the teachers by encouraging the sharing of ideas with their fellow teachers. This is in line with the view of Feldman that seeing the creative products of others would induce a desire to be creative and a belief that alternatives exist and creative outcomes are possible.

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