
12th LUMEN International Scientific Conference Rethinking
Social Action. Core Values in Practice | RSACVP 2019 | 15-17
May 2019 | Iasi – Romania

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<https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.175>

How to cite: Rotaru, R. E. (2019). Promoting the Development of Creativity in Education. In C. Ignatescu (ed.), *12th LUMEN International Scientific Conference Rethinking Social Action. Core Values in Practice, 15-17 May 2019, Iasi – Romania* (pp. 286-295). Iasi, Romania: LUMEN Proceedings.
<https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.175>



Promoting the Development of Creativity in Education

Ramona Elena ROTARU¹

Abstract

Creativity is progressively recognized as a key element of success in education. The various aspects and conditions of creativity have been identified by researchers, but currently, it appears to seem as a more important subject of interest towards many scientists. This article highlights the importance of developing the creativity of primary school children in the context of education. In a creative learning environment, primary school children expand their skills and strategies on various aspects of creative development. Creativity is an important part of education, making learning itself a social activity. The success of progress and evolution should be at the forefront of developing children creativity. First, it should be able to organize, select the right information, secondly to develop critical and original thinking and, last but not least, to manifest its creativity in its own affections and desires. The critical thinking and inner motivation of children influence the development of creativity. Personality, skills and talent highlight what a child can do when motivation indicates what will happen. Certainly, the creative environment can have a significant impact on children's motivation, but motivation rather than talent is more useful for the creative spirit. Moreover, the creative development of primary school children should be considered in two positions: individual creativity of each child and group creativity of the whole class. Many approaches which studied creativity that include the major orientations on explaining this phenomenon describes the complexity of the creativity, highlighting the development of this process as an expression of creativity and stimulates creative behaviour.

Keywords: *Creativity; primary education; motivation; critical thinking; creative environment;*

1. Introduction

The broad social relevance of the topic comes from the fact that creativity in our society is nowadays becoming more and more a subject of interest in education. Nonetheless, particularly little educational attention is

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference



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provided on developing the creativity of primary school children and is considered being a challenge for 21st-century education.

Through promoting the development of creativity in education, primary school pupils will learn how to develop their skills and strategies that actively stimulate their critical thinking, [1] inner motivation, progress, [2] and encourage creativity to make learning more effective. The purpose of this article is to raise awareness of the development of creativity of primary school children and its importance in the context of education. Creativity in education it is noticed as a basic survival and a relevant success factor. In addition, there is evidence that creative learning environments imply an impact on students' achievements and contribute to increased confidence, resilience, and inner motivation. In addition, developing social, emotional and thinking skills involving critical thinking helps to improve participation in school. [3] Therefore, primary school children enlarge their skills and strategies via proper creative environment. In a society where creativity, as well as intelligence, is socially considered to be more important, individual creativity is much more well-known and appreciated than one, which can be encouraged by a group. The individual creativity and the group creativity stands for two forms of creativity. They cannot be considered as entirely unrelated, since each part is unique and they correlate with each other. Owing to the fact that, in every creative approach of the group is connected the creative potential of each individual in the group. [4]

The importance of developing creativity is widely recognized as a stimulus for innovation, progression, and adaptability in an unpredictable and progressively changing world. Nonetheless, surprisingly little educational attention is traditionally afforded to identifying, analyzing and promoting teaching strategies that actively stimulate and nurture individual creativity in learners. [5]

2. Theoretical Background

Although the topic of creativity can be seen throughout history, it is essential to present a theoretical foundation of creativity in order to better understand its connection towards education. The term *creativity* was widespread in international languages only in the second half of our century, though in the past it was sporadically used. [2]

Littre introduced in 1877 the adjective *creative* in the French Language Dictionary entitled "Supplement", which stated that *creative* means "who has the quality to create". Even though, in 1937, G.W. Gordon Alport refers to creativity as skill, talent, creative imagination, and even intelligence. [2] The starting point of systematic investigation upon creativity began in

1950 when J. P. Guilford signals in the same year the deficiency of studies on creativity. He states that from 121,000 studies indexed in "Psychological Abstracts" over 23 years, only in 186 referred to creativity, which means less than 0.2%. [6, p. 15] More than 40 years ago, Paul Torrance stated in 1970 "Children are so accustomed to the right or best answer that they may be reluctant to think about other possibilities or build a lot of ideas to be evaluated later". [7] That is why the present article wants to emphasize the importance of children's creativity development in the educational context. The value of the article is highlighted by promoting the development of creativity in education because it represents a controversial subject in education for almost half a century.

Although creativity is a social need that ensures the survival of mankind, even in developed countries it is not seen nowadays as an important fact that assures the progression of a society's education. C. Rogers confess that education tends to form standardized people, with numerous and significant stereotypes, considering the fact that it is preferred nowadays to assure a more complete education than to develop creative, original and critical thinking. [6, p. 12] M. Roco emphasizes that the essence of creativity lies in its originality and novelty and therefore we have no standards to evaluate it. On the one hand, history has shown that if a product shows more originality and its connections are more distant in time, the stricter it will be judged in our current society, being considered useless, crazy, wrong and so on. On the other hand, these society's appreciations do not prevent geniuses to exist and to affirm themselves. Most authors believe that geniuses are a huge creative force, especially original. [6, pp. 14-15] For Robinson, creativity is give rise to new and contrasting ideas with significance and value. He firmly states that creativity must be at the same level as literacy because everybody is born with it, but we have to develop it as we grow up. [8]

The phenomenon of creativity linked to education is more complex and diverse than considered until recently. It is determined by multiple aspects that conducts to the development of creativity in education, like the impact of motivation, [2] critical thinking [1] and creative environment. Therefore, as long as the elements of creativity contribute to stimulate children's creative behaviour, the education will progress and society will benefit at the same time.

3. Argument of the paper

The development of creativity in education requires a start point. Moreover, this point requires self-education, which stands for the effort and

motivation of each person to practice and develop receptiveness to everything towards all it means creative behaviour. [4, p. 100] Given the important role education plays in children development, we argue that primary school children need to be motivated not only about how to develop their creativity, but also how to reflect on options and understand concepts in new ways. Thereby, creativity is linked to education from early steps and represents an important step in our progress and evolution.

The educational act must take into account the development of creativity and stimulate the inventive spirit among children from primary school. Developing the creativity of primary school pupils should be one of the main objectives pursued throughout primary education. Firstly, children should be encouraged to organize, select the correct information, then develop their critical and original thinking by resolving problematic situations, and ultimately manifest their creativity in combining new terms into original models. Creative activities are one of the greatest challenges of life and at the same time, draws on the greatest rewards. [1]

Hence, society from nowadays is undergoing a relocation cycle, starting from the period of information towards a period of conceptualization and that stands for creative and inventive children who will develop in this new society.

4. Arguments to support the thesis

The specialized literature, especially the one linked to creativity, points out the concern of the researchers to reveal different aspects and conditions about the current subject that envisage the development of children's creativity, marked by motivation, critical thinking and creative environment. Individually and group creativity are seen as two different positions in primary education and can generate a distinct and clear image in the education environment and in the spheres of interest.

It has been demonstrated that the creative process cannot be isolated from the context of psychic processes. In order to engage in any creative act, the child needs sufficient motivational energy to initiate and support the creative process. The power of motivation must be appropriate for the given situation. In the case of a too fragile motivation the child discourages too much and quits resolving the task. And in the case of too strong motivation, it is perceived deterioration of cognitive processes is observed, subtly reducing the resolution capacity. Very important for the creative motivation represents the way the individual and the results of his activity are appreciated. Moreover, the group has an important role in the formation and creation of possibilities for achieving creative motivation, by talking about

an educational climate that can stand for developing a creative environment. [9, p. 19]

Creativity has performed a more or less remarkable role in education. As Feldman and Benjamin point out, the impact and development of creativity in early childhood education have always been an extreme matter in education. [10, p. 252] In spite of the fact that we agree that the impact of creativity research on education has not been as solid as it might be, it is obvious that there has been significant work since Guilford's call, but not enough. [10, p. 253] Based on Sternberg and Kaufman's work, it was discovered established on their research, few examinations of models of creativity and the creativity literature, a large and a small number of ideas. Those ideas seem to have a significant potential for having an impact on education. The ability to estimate the utility of a new idea is an exceptionally important skill. If creativity is marked, and consequently stressed on in schools, then it can be viewed as an integral component in developing problem-solving ability in children through the limitless generation of ideas in the context of a task. Creativity can then be associated, teamed, combined with critical thinking and evaluative skills, social skills, and so on. These combined skills stand for assembling fuller and better-developed products of creativity. [10, pp. 259-260] In addition, critical thinking helps children to become more productive during classes and the most important for creativity are represented by critical thinking abilities.

Choosing creativity is a fantastically powerful problem-solving technique. It is an alternative, option we frequently make as children when other procedures for solving a problem do not seem very successful. This might take place individually or when working with a group of primary school children. It appears when we say, individually or collectively, "Hmmm... maybe I need to get creative for a while because this is not working". Children can be taught how to choose creativity in terms of problem-solving, both in conditions of the generating ideas' procedure and in conditions of making the selection of using creativity as a genuine part of their problem-solving procedures. [10, p. 260]

Kanter describes four stages of innovation in organizations that are helpful when analysing creative environments. Of course, these stages can be used for education also. First, the idea stands for generation phase that probably highlights the most critical part of the creative process. Secondly, there is a coalition-building phase, throughout which children in a class are convinced that the creative idea is a good one. Thirdly, there is a phase where ideas are expressed into actual products or processes. The fourth and last stage is when innovation is shifted or changed. [11] A creative

environment has a great impact on developing primary school children's creativity. There is proof that recommend a great impact of creative learning environments on pupils' academic accomplishment, like in the following: shows increased confidence and resilience; enhanced motivation and engagement; development of social, emotional and thinking skills; improved school attendance. [12]

5. Arguments to argue the thesis

The school contributes to lifelong learning skills and strategies and helps to structure pupils' independence and capacities. Moreover, the development of creativity and the discovery of social life are only a few aspects that contribute to design the future adult.

The great amount of knowledge that the school brings to children can form a social continuity through the cultural integration of the child in the social requirements and interests regarding the minimum level of culture, the level required by the concepts involved in the further development of primary education. As an institution, the school helps to develop the future of society. Creativity becomes educable in terms of the approach of modern management in which the teacher is interested in creating an appropriate climate, as a creative environment, by:

- proposing to use active methods;
- to make interdisciplinary correlations;
- to promote the free expression of children in learning;
- to stimulate the creative potential of each child by using group creativity, the most effective process supported by specialists. [13, p. 6]

Roco M. sets out three plans that can structure group creativity, specifically:

Table 1. Plans of group creativity [4]

Crt.	Three plans of group creativity						
1.	The <i>individual</i> plan	<i>skills</i>	<i>attitudes</i>	<i>professional training</i>			
		at the level of each member of the group					
		the <i>professional</i>		the <i>interpersonal</i>			
2.	The <i>interaction</i> plan	(relationships established between the group members)		(group of members' behavior within the group)			
3.	The <i>organizational</i> plan	<i>size</i>	<i>structure</i>	<i>functions of the group</i>	<i>the evaluation system</i>	<i>the leader's personality</i>	

Munteanu A. highlights the factors that are common to the two forms of creativity:

- two major coordinates - skills and attitudes;
- three segments: orientative-motivational, operational-cognitive, volitional-regulatory. [14]

Roco M. emphasizes the superiority of individual creativity to the group is explicable if we think of the higher degree of consistency of the personality system. This does not hinder the development of group creativity. There is also no question of choosing one of the ways to develop creativity (individual or group). In fact, group creativity includes the individual one, which it capitalizes and activates. Psychology can involve more efficiently in terms of stimulating group creativity than the individual one, because in the case of the group, it has multiple possibilities in organizing, conducting it according to the norms and requirements of creativity. [15]

Starting from the distinction between level and performance, we can notice that the group will always be superior to the individual if it provides the maximum utilization of the potential of all children. Also, while the superior individual performance is unplanned, the creative group's

performance is directed and organized according to the requirements of creativity. [15]

6. Dismantling the arguments against

The analysis of theoretical concepts in promoting the development in education applied to develop various aspects has demonstrated the usefulness, relevance and a great opportunity of developing in a new society. Concurrently, we cannot assume with certainty that creativity is perceived as a basic development in education because it is quite a new concept debated in our current society. Certainly, creativity contributes to evolving to higher primary education, but this concept needs to be applied and debated progressively. For this reason, we consider it appropriate to promote the development of creativity of primary school children in the context of education and to approach diverse issues, like children's motivation, developing their critical thinking, the importance of creative environment and improving individual and group creativity. In this context, the development of creativity must be considered as an important factor in education.

7. Conclusions

The development of creativity in primary education and its relevance to society progression, it emerges from what has been documented in the literature and emphasizes that creativity is the key element of success in education.

This is further emphasized by the fact that children's motivation plays a role in developing their creativity, alongside with critical thinking. Motivation and critical thinking are linked to each other because they contribute to developing creativity, improving children performance and achieving sustainable development. Critical thinking represents a condition and a procedure to accomplish effective learning with a fundamental role in developing an individual personality. Developing the critical thinking of children in the primary school system means, first of all, educating them in the spirit of critical thinking, later considering them why it is necessary to act in one way or another.

Moreover, the creative environment is a reasonable evidence that space within a classroom should be used flexibly to promote pupils' creativity. In addition, creativity can be considered an expression of the children personality but presumes great efforts in developing it. In primary education, all these efforts can be authentic landmarks in promoting the development of creativity in education. Creativity represents a significant

human characteristic. For sure, it is the best thought of as a process, expecting a blend of personality features, abilities, strategies and skills. Primary education can guide children to develop their creativity by providing a creative environment, helping children to increase, expand their skills and strategies through motivation, embracing critical thinking and behaving creatively themselves in a creative environment. The creative environment in the classroom for sure will help increase productivity and developing children's creativity according to their abilities.

Literature has emphasized that creativity is a key factor for creative expression; however, few studies have been developed to understand various aspects and conditions of creativity. In addition, few studies have been made in this domain. This theoretical study intends to bring a new vision about the topic as a means for improving the knowledge on promoting the development of creativity in education.

Note: This article draws on recent doctoral research.

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