

“CHANGING THE PARADIGM: DEVELOPING NEW UNDERSTANDINGS OF CREATIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION”

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ABSTRACT

The most important argument for higher education to take creativity in student’s learning more seriously is that creativity lies at the heart of learning and performing in any subject-based context and the highest levels of both are often the most creative acts of all. Facilitating conversations and debates on the role of creativity in higher education and the fields of endeavor it embraces may change the way people think and behave and encourage a culture that is more valuing of its effects in and beyond higher education learning. Unfortunately, as it is imparted in a majority of the schools in India suffers from an absence of creative and aesthetic efflorescence. Every learner enjoys undesirable scope for being imitative rather than creative. The need for stepping up of higher education to foster the spirit of creative and aesthetic awareness has become a must. Realizing the fact that creativity is an important element in relation to education and societal growth, the higher educational system must accept responsibility for supporting and developing creativity.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education occupies a special position in the educational system of any nation because it is at the apex of the entire educational structure and thus influences all levels of education. Through ideas and innovations, its influence on the future of the nation is also very considerable. It is higher education ‘firstly’, because it constitutes the top most stage of formal education and more importantly because it is concerned with processes in the more advanced phases of human learning. The entrants are mentally mature and capable of performing at the abstract level. They can analyze, synthesize and grasp concepts and ideas of all kind. Their creative faculties are also developed adequately. Consequently the content, methods of interaction and organization of work have to be very different from what they are at the school. The growth of science and technology during the later centuries not only vastly increased man’s fund of knowledge but also opened up more avenues for creativity. Knowledge came to be differentiated and specialized into different disciplines. The need now is manifold: to preserve what is known, to refine it and transmit it, to explore new knowledge and to expand its frontiers.

SPIRIT OF CREATIVE AWARENESS

Successful people do not necessarily have strengths in all areas, but they find ways to exploit whatever pattern of abilities they may have in any given situation context and align them in a way that value and meaning is created in their likes and in the communities they inhabit in any given situation or context. If education strives to prepare children for a productive life in society, the educational system must accept responsibility for supporting and developing creativity. Every educator can change the way he or she thinks and acts, every group of teachers responsible for creating students’ educational experiences can

choose or not choose to provide experiences that will help students develop their creative potential and every institutional decision maker can shape policy, strategy or management practices so that creativity will flourish or be inhibited. Reciprocally the emancipation of creative sensibilities is geared to the promotion of education for inner awakening leading to the promotion of inner harmony thus paving the way gradually for social harmony and peace. With the demand from education for bringing about harmony in human life the need for stepping up of higher education to foster the spirit of creative awareness has become a must.

HABITS LEADING TO CREATIVITY

Jiddu Krishnamurthy, a contemporary thinker, talks about the aim of education being the development of a seeker of knowledge through the process of enquiry. If curiosity is to be fruitful, it must be associated with a certain technique for the acquisition of knowledge. There must be habits of observation, inquiry, activity and production. These habits lead to creativity, a concern for the development of students' potential in a more holistic sense than most higher education experiences currently provide. This provides a wonderful insight into the potential role that higher education could play in helping students develop their understandings and awareness of their own creativities as they develop their self-identity.

CREATIVITY – ITS ROLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Creativity need not be seen as a standalone competency but in the context of other abilities and capacities that are developed through a tertiary education. If creativity is central to being, then higher education needs to understand what it means to be creative in the many domains it embraces e.g. historian, biologist, lawyer, engineer or any other disciplinary field of endeavor. We need to raise awareness of what creativity means in these different contexts and encourage educators to support forms of learning that will enable students to develop the forms of creativity that are most appropriate for their field of study and future careers. Higher education needs to see creativity within the important role it plays in preparing people for an uncertain and ever more complex world of work, a world that requires people to utilize their creative as well as their analytical capacities. The work needs people who can combine their knowledge, skills and capabilities in creative and adventurous ways to find and solve complex problems. Creativity is important to our inventiveness, adaptability and productivity as an individual and to the prosperity and functioning of our organizations and more generally to the health and prosperity of our society and economy.

BARRIERS AND INHIBITORS TO CREATIVITY

The problem with higher education, it is argued, is that it pays far too little attention to students' creative development. Indeed the problem is not that creativity is absent; but that it is omnipresent within the analytical and critical ways of thinking that dominate the academic intellectual territory. Although students are expected to be creative, creativity is rarely an explicit objective of the learning and assessment process. There are many barriers and inhibitors to creativity in the higher education scene. Barriers include: staff and student attitudes/ resistances / capabilities, organizational- structural, cultural, procedural; time and other resources; government policy. Every educator can change the way he/she thinks and acts, every group of teachers responsible for creating students' educational experiences can choose or not choose to provide experiences that will help students' develop their creative potential, and

every institutional decision maker can shape policy, strategy or management practices so that creativity will flourish or be inhibited. For teachers, Creativity only has meaning when it is directly associated with the practices and forms of intellectual engagement in their discipline. Many teachers find it hard to translate the generic language and processes of creativity into their subject specific contexts conversely; many higher education teachers have limited knowledge of creative approaches to teaching even within their discipline. Most higher education teachers are unfamiliar with the body of research into creativity and how creative thinking techniques can be use to facilitate and problems working. While many higher education teachers recognize the intrinsic moral value of promoting students’ creativity, they baulk at what they perceive as the additional work necessary to successfully implement more creative approaches. Furthermore, any conversation about creativity raises many organizational barriers and factors that inhibit or stifle attempts or nurture creativity.

THE SECRET WITHIN CREATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Creating teaching in the ultimate analysis manifests itself in creating expressive ability that exceeds the learning capacity. To the extent it deemphasizes content teaching and it has to be adventurous. One aspect of its practical modality would be by posing a problem to which the teacher himself/herself has no pre-tested answer. This, however, will presuppose a lot of ingenuity in formulating the problem so that the problem is recognized with the same sense of curiosity and puzzlement which the teacher brings to it. Surely, creative teaching will then put to test the teachers’ ability in guiding the students about the implications of problem for arriving at its probable solutions. The teacher may assume that he himself has no preconceived answers and as such, he should actually work with students rather than working at them. The teacher may have to fumble and may at times be taken surprise by unexpected developments that unfold as a result of seminar discussions. He must then let his pupils rescue him as he often rescues them. Their joint efforts will help them arrive at solutions that can truly be said to be the joint product of both the teacher and the taught. In many cases it would be found that it is not the eventual solution that matters. Teaching will become a lively exercise and best results out it can assuredly be expected. For a teacher to be able to teach creatively the following traits are desirable: Adaptability, Dynamism, Patience, Considerateness, Leadership, Cooperation, Farsightedness, Initiation, Morality and Spirituality, Devotion, Dependability, Carrying of his work and conduct, Forcefulness, Originality in expression and fluency in speech and action. The main actor on the educational stage is the teacher. Teacher has to work hard not only for his own great reputation but also for keeping up traditional conventions of his country. Of all the participants in the drama of education the role of the teacher is significant and full of responsibility. At a moment teacher can afford to neglect his duties. His neglecting the duty of being creative in teaching is not only affected by past, present but the future badly by single wrongful act of a teacher. In the teaching and learning system, the teacher is the representative of the field. The teacher acts as is the representative of the field. The teacher acts as a process creator, organizer, facilitator and monitor to ensure that the best conditions and support that can be given are provided. Learners are the people in the system whose creativities are being stimulated and developed by the teachers’ pedagogic strategies. The subject/ discipline is the domain which provides a rich knowledge base and endless source of stimulation. Creativity exists and operates on a continuum from inventions and interventions that change the world. In school education, there has been a shift in the last few decades from seeing creativity as an ability associated with the very gifted and most able, to something that we all possess to varying degrees and

which can be encouraged, nurtured and developed. We don't need creativity for routine, predictable situation. It becomes necessary and important when we want to move beyond the known or when we are confronted with complex, indeterminate problems or situations. We need to see that are developed for working with new, complex and challenging problems and situations.

CONCLUSION

The most important argument for higher education to take creativity in students' learning more seriously is that creativity lies at the heart of learning and performing in any subject-based context and the highest levels of both are often the most creative acts of all. Facilitating conversations and debates on the role of creativity in higher education and the fields of endeavor it embraces, may change the way people think and behave and encourage a culture that is more valuing of its effects in and beyond higher education learning. Unfortunately, as it is imparted in a majority of the schools in India suffers from an absence of creative and aesthetic efflorescence. Every learner enjoys undesirable scope for being imitative rather than creative. The need for stepping up of higher education to foster the spirit of creative and aesthetic awareness has become a must. Realizing the fact that creativity is an important element in relation to education and societal growth, the higher educational system must accept responsibility for supporting and developing creativity.

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