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**“MANAGING RESOURCE THROUGH
CREATIVITY FOR GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES
IN 21ST CENTURY”**

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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Seventh National Conference on
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SIGNIFICANCE OF CREATIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Creativity refers to the development of ideas about products, practices, services or procedures that are novel and potentially useful to the organization. Creativity is the set of attitudes, abilities, and mental processes that increases the probability of hitting upon the solution that seemed to be well informed both novel and appropriate. It encompasses the process of generating new ideas which can further result in a formulating new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form. Creativity in the workplace has often been associated with the generation of novel ideas, the development of innovative products and services and as such with organizational performance, competitive advantage and growth. This means that creativity is an important concept both from the perspective of organizational theory and from the viewpoint of management practitioners interested in fostering creativity of students to achieve their organization's goals.

INTRODUCTION:

In our knowledge society, it is more and more important to encourage students to develop their abilities to reason and think creatively. The notion of the knowledge society is widely discussed in the literature, with many ideas about knowledge and education emerging in recent years.

For example, exploring theoretical underpinnings of the concept, Hammershøj (2006) strongly contends that the knowledge society is an economic concept based on the idea that the primary focus of production has shifted from industry to knowledge. This production is of specifically *creative* knowledge, as indicated by a contemporary discursive emphasis on both "creativity and innovation".

Objective:

- To understand the importance of creativity in Higher Education
- To encourage the educators in higher education to think freshly about creativity and to widen their range of strategies for impart student creativity.

EXPLORING THE NATURE OF CREATIVITY: -

The nature of creativity can be explained on the basis of some ideas given below:

- Philosophical And Theoretical Understandings Of Creativity
- Starting Points For Creativity
- The Four Interweaving Elements Of Creativity
- Perspectives On The Outcomes Of Creativity.

Philosophical and Theoretical Understandings

Brockling (2006, p. 516) presents an illuminating four-dimensional philosophical view of creativity. It illuminates the argument on creativity in this chapter as it is propagating the need for creativity, freedom and self-determination to harmonize, aspects that teachers can support in their own students.

1. Something that everyone has – an anthropological capacity;
2. Something one ought to have – a binding norm;
3. Something one can never have enough of – a telos without closure;
4. Something that can be intensified through methodological instruction and exercise – a learnable competence.

Starting Points:

For us, the creative process begins when the gap between "who we are and what we do" (Kane, 2004) is narrowed. This is a Rousseauism: I am myself to the extent that I am creative. Therefore, the first role of the educator in developing creativity is to encourage students to explore who they are by identifying their particular passions, interests and gifts. So if one wish to inject creativity in the education system, the first step might be to help students find out what they truly love, and help them to immerse themselves in the domain – be it poetry or physics, engineering or dance. If young people become involved in what they enjoy, the foundations for creativity will be in place (Csikszentmihalyi,

2006, pp. xix-xx). Once students have identified their domains of interest, they can be encouraged to go on to enquire into more specific topics, projects, specialisations and employment niches that engage them.

The Four Elements of Creativity

The operational definition of creativity for this chapter is provided by Robinson (2001, p. 211), who characterizes creativity as having four main elements:

- the medium
- expertise in or mastery of the medium
- the need to play and take risks
- the need for critical judgement.

Each of these elements gives rise to important considerations for learning and teaching. For example, it is important to consider media for creativity in order to answer the following types of questions about learning and teaching strategy:

- What are the right media for individual students in relation to their interests, talents and preferences?
- As an educator, how can I best develop creativity in students by allowing or encouraging them to find the right medium or combination of media?
- What are my critical reflections on the media I currently use in my teaching?
We should be aiming not only to help students explore media for creativity, but also to achieve expertise in or mastery of certain media. Therefore, we might consider the following questions:
- What opportunities do we provide as educators for our students to reach high skills levels in the use of a variety of media?
- Do we teach academic writing, creative writing, visual literacy, drawing or whatever skills are relevant to our students to develop their creativity?
- How do we foster both the development of learning skills and imagination?
As we answer these questions, we might remember that creativity "is not only a matter of control: it's about speculating, exploring new horizons, and using imagination" (Robinson, 2001, p. 133).

Kane (2004) asserts that play has replaced work as the dominant mode of the 21st century for generating meaning. In higher education, we can encourage students to play with the ideas and interrelationship between concepts by asking ourselves the following questions:

- Do we give students freedom enough to play?
- Are we, as educators, enthusiastic and playful about our subjects?
- How do we encourage students to combine creative thinking with critical thinking, brainstorming with judgments and exploration with discipline in ways that will enhance their creativity?
- How do we stimulate students to articulate the questions they want to explore rather than simply transmitting knowledge to them?

By dialoguing with these questions we can find concrete ways to encourage students to engage in the creativity of playfully combining things that they have not previously combined together.

The Outcomes of Creativity:

Creativity is also characterized by the nature of its outcomes. Thus Robinson (2002, p. 118) defines creativity as "imaginative processes with outcomes that are original and of value". It is important that in our work of developing creativity we both widen and revitalize our notion of originality. Originality is not only about producing something new but also about combining old elements in new ways or applying old ideas to new contexts in order to work on a problem, advance a particular field and to add to the storehouse of knowledge and the repertoires of professional and artistic practices.

Murray and Moore (2006, p. 31) note that creative people are "more likely to think in boundary less ways about a topic, and are happy to 'borrow' important notions from fields of enquiry other than their own". The outcomes of creativity are personal and/or economic, but can also be spiritual, social, environmental and political.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING STUDENT CREATIVITY: -

Jackson, Oliver, Shaw & Wisdom (2006) argue that it is important to develop student creativity in higher education for personal, economic and social reasons.

On a personal level, improved creative capacity is likely to generate gains in satisfaction, wellbeing, happiness and self-identity, as well as enhanced potential for professional development. These gains occur as individuals explore their own potential and imagine new possibilities for themselves and

others. Personal creativity understood in terms of the play ethic is a way of thinking that tries to close a huge gap in modern living, the gap between who we are and what we do (Kane, 2004). On Economic ground, increased global competition and the growth of the information society and new technologies, has resulted in the emergence of new forms of work and the demand for new kind of workers – that is, knowledge workers. These workers draw on creative knowledge to produce new products and services to support economic growth. Brockling (2006, p. 513) argues that: The importance of being creative is nowadays connected to the mobilization of the entrepreneurial self. Entrepreneurial action demands permanent innovation and consequently ceaseless creative exertion. Everybody not only has to be simply creative, but more creative than the others. The social reasons for developing students' creativity are paramount. The contemporary world is ever-changing and "super complex", rather than complex: A complex world is one in which we are assailed by more facts, data, evidence, tasks and arguments than we can easily handle within the frameworks in which we have our being. By contrast a super complex world is one in which the very frameworks by which we orient ourselves to the world are themselves contested (Barnett, 2000, p. 257). New, different and creative thinking will allow students to respond to both the possibilities and problems presented by this super complex world. For example, we need creative thinking to tackle global problems including world poverty and global environmental issues, to "enrich the future instead of impoverishing it" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006, p. xiix). In turn, we need pedagogies that can support and nurture this kind of thinking: The challenge to humanity is to adopt new ways of thinking, new ways of acting, new ways of organizing itself in society, in short, new ways of living (Wilson 1997, p.11)

FACILITATING STUDENT CREATIVITY:

If creativity is so important, how do we facilitate it? There have been extensive and comprehensive reviews of the large literatures bases within creativity, teaching and learning by Stein (1988) and Fryer (2003), among others. There has, however, been a lack of critical engagement with the question of introducing creativity to the higher educational system. Indeed, Gardner (1982) notes that earlier studies of learning and development had mostly neglected creativity. Recently, this gap has been addressed by Jackson, Oliver, Shaw & Wisdom (2006), who focus on the role of creativity in higher education.

Csikszentmihalyi (2006) believes that if young people become involved with what they enjoy, the foundations for creativity will be in place. It follows therefore that teachers must model the joy of learning themselves, and be able to spark it in their students. Similarly, pedagogy should be focused on arousing student imagination and engagement. Since the late 1990s, several studies have identified common themes in what students and teachers say about how best to facilitate student creativity in higher education. For example, Cropley (2001) suggests that surveys have shown that in theory at least, teachers overwhelmingly support creativity as something that should be fostered in the classroom. Moreover, teachers who successfully facilitate creativity are likely to be those who encourage independent learning, take student questions seriously, promote self-evaluation, reward courage as much as correctness, and who have a cooperative, socially integrative teaching style.

Research by Oliver *et al* (2006) on students' experiences of creativity in a broad spread of subject disciplines points to specific teaching techniques that students consider to be creative. These include role-playing, debates and posters for class presentations. Some quite conventional forms of teaching are also nominated as creative, specifically dialogic teaching with discussions that concentrate on students' current understanding or beliefs. One-to-one tutorials are highlighted as especially helpful to students, as are providing encouragement, giving examples or offering feedback. Teachers should note that it is *how* these techniques are used, rather than the mere inclusion of them within our repertoire of techniques, that is the key to success.

A study by Fryer (2006) identifies several teaching techniques for facilitating creativity: heuristic strategies i.e. problem-based learning (Barrett 2005); game-based learning that utilizes challenging problems; real-life scenarios; practical exercises; and group work. As in Oliver *et al* (2006), Fryer's work shows that positive teacher attitudes and supportive factors such as the relationship between tutor and students are also significant in facilitating a creative learning environment. Teaching specific creative thinking tools in a way that is embedded into the discipline is important to provide the foundations for students to work creatively (Baillie 2003). There are several thinking tools such as the six thinking hats technique that can be used to stimulate creativity among students (de Bono, 1999; Baillie, 2003). These techniques have been proven to stimulate creativity in both education and work contexts.

Several initiatives are taking place in learning and teaching to foster student creativity. For example, Diehm's (2004) research focuses on the use of electronic portfolio projects to highlight the creative nature of student learning. Through the use of 'efolis', students are encouraged to learn new skills and concurrently are being challenged to implement them. Indeed, in recent years, technology has been regarded as having a potentially critical role to play in supporting and transforming creative communities at all levels and stages in the higher educational process. It is argued in this chapter that the challenge for educators is to research fully these opportunities, as well as to learn how to sustain the creative process successfully within higher education. The technology, whatever its nature, should support the pedagogical purpose underpinning creative learning by sharing goals, purposes, knowledge, multiple perspectives and experiences.

ASSESSMENTS THAT STIMULATE CREATIVITY:

Assessment is among the most important influences on learning, as highlighted by Biggs (1999). Dissatisfaction with assessment practices in higher education continues to the present day, and in recent years, there have been increasing calls for alternative assessment approaches that include performance-based, portfolio and authentic assessment (Anderson, 1998). Beghetto (2005) suggests that assessment practices can influence students' creativity. Studies have demonstrated that imagination and visualising had a positive effect on student performance on exams, and such studies have illustrated that creativity is intertwined with reasoning (Claxton, 1999). Building on the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1997), Beattie (2000) concludes that creativity can and should be assessed although it is recognized that attempts to produce methods for the assessment of creativity have not been straight forward. The tensions that arise from the assessment of creative activities exist for different reasons.

- Does it involve creating measures of creativity for statutory exams or is the assessment of creativity for providing feedback to individuals on their achievements and ways forward for progression?
- Indeed, does it extend to having a process to recognize and celebrate meaningful and original personal expression?

Students feel that essay-based course-work is more effective than exams in supporting creativity through collaboration, with peer assessment offering the potential to improve students' work. The general consensus from the literature is that assessment should be varied in order to support the development of different aptitudes and encourage thinking in different ways. A diversity of assessment types can be an important stimulus to creative work, including more formative assessment and a balance of written and practical work. Particular examples are report-writing, article critique, group work and negotiated projects between students.

There are, however, well-recognised difficulties with integrating creativity in assessment practices. Cowan (2006) argues that of all the cognitive abilities, synthesis or creativity is the most difficult to assess. There is significant variation in the evidence teachers seek for creativity: examples include originality, innovative thinking, entrepreneurship, problem-solving ability, initiative, inventiveness, the ability to generate ideas, and motivation.

The core problem is that the creative process, for any learner, is unpredictable and difficult to capture. But moving from assessing the creative process to assessing a creative product does not necessarily offer an easier solution. Arguably, this is partly because the best person to judge the conception and development of an innovative product is the creative student him or herself. Nevertheless, two methods of assessing creativity have emerged from the literature. Cowan (2006) believes self-assessment can be a way forward. The role of the teacher is to create the conditions that facilitate creative learning and "help the students develop their capacity to recognise, represent and evaluate their own creativity" (Cowan, 2006, p. 162). Alternatively, Balchin (2006) suggests consensual assessment, which involves several appropriate assessors who are familiar with the domain in which the product is created to agree that it is creative. One of the main benefits of this latter form of assessment is that it engages teachers in purposeful professional dialogue about creativity. These serious conversations have the potential for teachers to develop new and deeper understandings about the nature of creativity. This leads us to our final issue for discussion – how does all this impact on the professional development of educators?

INCORPORATING CREATIVITY INTO THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS: -

Howard-Jones (2008) argues that the UK government presently considers creativity to be a key "employability" skill in terms of the creative industries and beyond, including within the sectors of science and technology. There has been a recent flourishing of interest in the nurturing of creativity

among young people (Roberts, 2006, Downing et al., 2007) and yet the provision of support for teachers and trainee teachers to achieve this remains a major challenge for education.

One of the many questions to emerge from the field of creativity is why should higher education teachers be interested in creativity? We argue that it is because we live in a complicated and messy world in which work for most of our graduates is a continuous stream of "problems" with no simple or unique solutions. Our ability to work creatively as educators will in turn help our students survive and thrive in this world and help them to lead more satisfying and meaningful lives. It is vital that teachers have a good understanding of creativity and creative education.

Many teachers are already doing impressive work that could be capitalised on, in collaboration with other providers, to put creative education firmly on the teacher professional development agenda. Indeed, some such training could be provided online. Much of the professional literature appears to lean towards creative thinking being a challenging endeavour. An integral part of teaching methodologies designed to foster creative reflection is the type of classroom environment which the teacher helps to create. What is needed are teachers who engage their students in meaningful activities- ones which incorporate students' unique interests, abilities, backgrounds and community needs.

Underpinning the development of creative thinking is the need for cultural change in higher education so that the value of creativity is more accepted (Wisdom, 2006). We argue that teachers need professional development opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills to nurture creativity in their students. Teachers need to understand and appreciate their own creativity and to recognize it as a fundamental part of their professional development. Each student has some innate creative potential, which can be enhanced by teachers who are aware of and knowledgeable about proven and effective ways to teach creative behaviour.

Accredited teacher preparation programmes are on the increase in the higher education sector and are supported by the dual use of the teaching portfolio (Donnelly, 2006) as a vehicle for reflection on practice and as a means of formative self-assessment. The portfolio has the ability to embrace risk and reflection and create the conditions that promote teachers' creativity. The reflective process of portfolio development can be as important as the final product. Ideas and beliefs about what constitutes good teaching practice change through personal experience of both teaching and learning. Through these experiences we learn to identify the most effective and creative teaching methodologies, what works for us as teachers and what helps us as learners. Further more, with the increased use of e-portfolio learning technologies who create their own digital teaching portfolios can become aware of the potential of the technology to enable the creative thinking process.

CONCLUSION:

Many Governments presently considers creativity to be a key "employability" skill in terms of the creative industries and beyond, including within the sectors of science and technology. There has been a recent flourishing of interest in the nurturing of creativity among young people and yet the provision of support for teachers and trainee teachers to achieve this remains a major challenge for education. It is important to consider how best to support teachers to teach relatively so that they can transfer the benefits of creative learning strategies to their students.

One of the many questions to emerge from the field of creativity is why should higher education teachers be interested in creativity? We argue that it is because we live in a complicated and messy world in which work for most of our graduates is a continuous stream of "problems" with no simple or unique solutions. Our ability to work creatively as educators will in turn help our students survive and thrive in this world and help them to lead more satisfying and meaningful lives. It is vital that teachers have a good understanding of creativity and creative education. Many teachers are already doing impressive work that could be capitalised on, in collaboration with other providers, to put creative education firmly on the teacher professional development agenda. Indeed, some such training could be provided online.

Much of the professional literature appears to lean towards creative thinking being a challenging endeavour. An integral part of teaching methodologies designed to foster creative reflection is the type of classroom environment which the teacher helps to create. What is needed are teachers who engage their students in meaningful activities- ones which incorporate students' unique interests, abilities, backgrounds and community needs.

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