



Promoting creativity in the classroom

Dear Readers,

According to Einstein, “It is supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.” He had a classical education and mostly had problems with teachers. He changed basics of physics with his never ending questions and creative mind. Throughout his lifetime, principles of education were also much changed. Educators has given to their students more place and let them inquire.

Children always ask questions and set scenes according to the scenarios in their minds. In positivist pedagogy, teacher was the sole knowledge holder of information and the students were like empty memory sticks that should be loaded. With the constructivism, learning processes has become important (Hichney, 2010).

According to Torrance, creative thinking is a natural process and can be described as the process of sensing difficulties, problems, information gaps, missing elements, asking things, making guesses and formulating hypotheses about these deficiencies, evaluating and testing these guesses and hypotheses; possibly revising and retesting them; and finally communicating the results (Shaughnessny, 1998) . That can be seen as a long list but every child has this innate creative spirit. The main question for the educators is how they can improve creative thinking.

Torrance did not just define he also gave the recipe for a creative classroom. First of all, students should be encouraged and motivated and teacher should know their students’ talents and reward them (Shaughnessny, 1998). There are many strategies that facilitate this process. Torrance (1965) summarizes these strategies in a progressive classroom:

1. Individual differences among children should be recognized.
2. Students learn best by being part of a process.
3. Education is a continuous reconstruction of living experience that goes beyond the classroom.
4. The classroom should be a laboratory for democracy.
5. Social goals, as well as intellectual goals, are important.
6. A child must be taught to think critically rather than to accept blindly.

In a creative classroom, teacher himself should be a creative person. According to role identity theory (Mccall & Simmons, 1978), role identities determine a person’s interpretations of the people, situations and events that s/he encounters in various situations (Tan Ai- Girl, 1999). As a role model teachers should show creative thinking procedures to their students.

The classroom environment should be well prepared for the learning process, Teachers should make more place for visual reflections on their walls. A classroom full of visuals and mind maps help not only to the students who come with the idea, but also the others who will add new ideas to previous ones.

Learning in a fixed environment gives students the idea of sameness. Classrooms should have changeable layouts. While choosing these classroom orders, students should be free as much as they want.

In our day, teachers don't act as source of information and students know their teachers' facilitator role. Knowing students learning ambitions, teachers should show the ways that give them chance to learn more. Naturally, Some students will learn faster and promote more ideas than others. In this case, teacher should reward them and provide more learning opportunities. Peer learning can be helpful for the fast and relatively slow learners. These activities can be rewarding for fast learners, as they have a leader and teacher role, while their friends learn strategies from them. Because symbolic rewards are important for children, a corner for prizes should take part in a creative classroom.

As a facilitator, teacher should teach not the subjects but the strategies to be more creative. S/he should ask questions to students and help them ask questions to themselves. Also, there should always be set of goals which are decided with the students.

When you look through classroom window, a creative class seems colourful and chaotic. Because discussion is an inseparable part of creation process. Students discuss their ideas and enhance them. They can learn with games, drama activities and open ended projects. As long as they show an outcome, learning products can be in any format.

Students should be assigned projects that are chosen by themselves. Preassigned projects will not encourage them. Also, teachers should be able to push students to leave their comfort zone. Also it is important to help them to change their routines and think differently (Karanian & Chedid, 2004).

Educational materials are also changeable. For learning, anything can be an educational material. A definite book is not followed in a creative classroom. Students who came with an authentic material are always welcomed. Teacher uses posters, classroom diaries, video records and music during the learning process.

Children have everlasting curiosity. The main purpose of education should be helping them to saturate this feeling. They should ask questions that are never asked before and know the strategies to answer these questions.

Sincerely,

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