

Impacts of Group Work on Creative Thinking Among Students

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ABSTRACT

Most academicians, philosophers, technocrats and business leader urge that change is inevitable. But do they state the exact cause of change? In reality, change occurs when the normal circumstances take a new direction completely different from the current state of affairs. Transformation is brought about by new ways, situations, environment, and methods of carrying out different aspects of life. Change can be associated with creativity. Creative processes are all over our daily routines that bring about new ways of doing things. To define creativity is the first step before establishing how it can be enhanced. As previously mentioned, creativity is most appreciated as music and art. However, this perspective is wrong. In fact, creativity can be defined as the process that involves the regeneration of new ideas for doing normal tasks. For these ideas to be part of a creative process, they must have accompanying benefits that entirely involve making it easier to carry out a certain activity. From this perspective, we can recognize the positive benefit associated with creativity. It is an important process that societies need to develop. There are a number of aspects that are referred to as catalysts of creative thinking. Among these aspects is group work effectively. This paper explores how working as groups enhances creative thinking among students and hence enable a revolution in society.

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INTRODUCTION

According to DeSchryer and Yadav, 2015, computational thinking is one of the major aspects that enhance creative thinking. "Technological advancements have encouraged use of new learning strategies with computational thinking to equip learners with problem solving and critical thinking skills (DeSchryer and Yadav, 2015). This perspective towards creativity thinking enhancement helps to build the following foundational aspects of creative development.

INTEGRATION OF LITERARY SOURCES

The technology uses networks that enable learners to interact with the rest of the world. Use of digital devices, web-based devices which are of high processing speed enables a learner to quickly meet and interact with other learners in different geographical locations whose learning perspectives are different and enable the learners to link up, exchange information on the internet. For instance, a learner in the United States who wishes if a certain activity can be done with the least time possible gets into the internet and meets a demonstration for a faster method from a person in China. It will be easier for the learner to appreciate the fundamentals of that technique. The internet, for instance, is a great source of a literature review. Before a creative process is generated, an individual has to interact with the current information already available to be able to think of a better technique (DeSchryer & Yadav, 2015).

Computational processes put learners to open thinking. It helps the student appreciate new knowledge and positively recognize the contributions made by others as that of credible importance. This forms the basis of group work for learners in that it enables students in different disciplines to appreciate what other people have to contribute towards solving a problem. In fact, failure to appreciate new knowledge from others hinders creative thinking. Students are thus set

for a challenge to reason out new ways for approaching a specific problem. Therefore, integrated literary sources are typical representations of group efforts that enable creative thinking.

DIVERSITY IN GROUP WORK ENHANCES CREATIVITY

Divergent thinking leads to competition in solving a problem. Normally when challenged, a human being will reason a way out to outshine the competing brains. This is the reason why group work brings about creativity. When students come together to discuss a certain phenomenon, different views will be brought to the table. These opinions become subject to rationalization to scrutinize their credibility towards solving the current problem. Establishing a challenging environment for learners through groups enables them to question the aspects of that specific argument rather than just utilizing the knowledge. It offers the students a conducive environment to carefully observe the feasibility areas of the opinion before making a conclusion.

Students are exposed to different environments such as their family backgrounds, parental guidance and the resources they are exposed to. During a group, they present their ideas to a typical society. In fact, a randomly chosen group of learners represents society. When a student presents this idea, it is equally presented in society and its acceptability will also be translated into the whole community. When criticized in the group, it opens up the mind of the learner to divergent thinking by incorporating all critics in the societal context hence building up a more realistic idea.

GROUPS PROVIDE A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR IDEA PRESENTATION

In a classroom setting, teachers follow the laid down curriculum and hence transfer the required knowledge to the learners. This can be referred to as a cognitive development process for the students. According to Hartley & Plucker, 2014, a survey done for American and Chinese

Elementary classrooms shows that in most cases, classroom settings do not contribute to creativity. Creative thinking involves a process of mistakes and regeneration of ideas. However, in classrooms, students are not only allowed to make mistakes but are also afraid of criticisms by their teachers. This is why group work creates a conducive environment for enhancing the creative process.

CLASSROOM TEACHING PRACTICES

The Chinese educational system has been restructured to not only focus on academic success but also engage students in extracurricular activities. In most cases, learners are able to engage in interactive activity when having fun. This may be in form of jokes and games with help improve creative thinking among the learners. The American curriculum has been focusing on standardized learning that places students under the same syllabus and examinations. However, there is reluctance to the way students are scheduled for activities that involve mental development (Niu & Kaufman, 2013).

Games, jokes, and projects are main factors that help a student think differently from the normal way he or she has been taught. They present a challenge to learners and in the process of trying to solve the challenges, they are able to discover new feasible methods and approaches. It is true that Asian countries have enacted formal policies promoting the integration of creativity in public education than the American system of education. This can be interpreted through observations between the current levels of innovation between the two continents. The Asian countries are fast moving with innovation from technology to business (Hartley & Plucker, 2014).

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN FOSTERING CREATIVITY

Pluut & Curseu, 2013 explains how group work enhances the creative process through diverse interactions. Culture is among the most influential aspects that bring about diversity. The way children have been brought up contributes a lot to their behavioral thinking. For instance, some cultural backgrounds allow children to start carrying out some activities at different ages. In most African countries, for instance, children begin to do some basic things for themselves at tender ages and are able to get more independent earlier. This means that such children are exposed to decision making early in life. This may influence their creativity. However, American and Asian countries invest earlier in their children preferences such as talents, art, and computing. In this case, the educational systems equip students with particular skills in regard to their areas of interest. When these cultural values are brought together in a group, students are able to successfully solve a problem by supporting each other in areas of weakness. In addition, ideas which are bred on cultural diversity are more acceptable to the society which exhibit different backgrounds. Globally, most countries have realized the importance of creative thinking in the curriculum and have moved towards restructuring of the educational curriculum to support innovation.

During a group discussion, students are able to understand the information gaps they are experiencing due to their geographical diversity. Some learners are able to access certain phenomenon in which others are not able to. Group work is an avenue therefore for exchanging knowledge and experience for students. During innovation, it is not always that the ideas and the accompanying resources originate from the same person. In fact, a number of people mostly come together and bring in their ideas to make that idea rationally applicable. Most successful

businesses were established by partners who took time to exchange knowledge. A feasible idea may fail just because the implementation was not handled by the right minds.

GROUP WORK ENHANCES COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Collaborative learning involves a group of students learning together or working to solve a problem as one. This aspect greatly contributes to creative thinking in that it brings about a competitive environment for learners. Ideas are raised, corrected and challenged in the group and hence enabling students to appreciate the new knowledge.

MOTIVATION EFFECT

Working as a group to solve a problem is motivational than alone. This is because psychologically, all minds are focused on finding the solution and that it would be shameful for everyone in the group if the problem ends up unsolved. This challenging environment helps to commit to minds together giving attention to every detail suggested by the group members until a solution is found. By doing so, students are able to recognize the importance of a universal approach towards a problem. When thinking alone, one may be tempted to rest on their comfort zones and accept defeat. This is overturned in a group setting when all minds are focused on the same thing (Berg & Volkman, 2011).

OBJECTIONS

The most common objections to the use of groups to enhance creative thinking among students are time consumption and the probability of discouragements. It is true that group work takes time from the organization of the members to arrive at a common agreement. However, it is possible to overcome these challenge by ensuring time consciousness. To easily organize the

group, it is important to have a responsible and competent group leader who is able to mobilize the members to cooperate. To ensure that a group observes certain rules and regulations to governing its participants, such laws should be structured and their respective punishments to ensure they are observed. The teacher is mostly responsible for ensuring discipline is upheld in these groups and hence conduct them effectively. However, the teachers should give freedom for discussions among the students while ensuring the environment for all students' contributions is maintained.

To minimize the time for reaching a consensus, the group members should ensure that their contributions are both relevant and rational to the topic of discussion. This may be made easier by observing corrections positively and defending a position with a concrete background. This approach enables to eliminate any possible long arguments which may not be very fruitful. To make sure that these aspects are observed, members of a group should be selectively focused towards common objectives. Therefore, elimination of any possible distracters should be done earlier enough to avoid time wastage. In conclusion, group work enhances creativity by bringing together various support aspects of conducive, diverse, rational, exploratory and competitive thinking. The common factors that make group work more effective are cultural backgrounds, extracurricular activities, collaborative learning, divergent thinking, knowledge exchanges, and behavioral thinking modeling. Creative thinking is the source of innovation. Most leading economies are first innovators and continue to invest heavily in creative thinking to bring forth learners who are transformative through new ideas for living.

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