

Creativity in Education: A Global Concern

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Most would agree that the world needs innovators to solve global economic, social and environmental issues. Creativity and innovation are worldwide areas of concern. Based on a review of decades of scores on the E. Paul Torrance Test of Creativity, Kim reported a decline in creativity in the US in 2010. Her report attracted national attention. That same year, based on Kim's data, Bronson and Merryman (2010) declared that the US was experiencing a "crisis in creativity," although leaders in business and economics had already determined that the crisis was "looming" (Florida, 2004).

In first two decades of the 21st century, creativity was becoming a popular focus globally. For example, as Bronson and Merryman indicated, 2009 was designated as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation with the slogan "Imagine. Create. Innovate." and the mission of "Raising awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for personal social and economic development" (European

Commission, 2008). Similarly, in China where creativity continues to be deemed a national priority (Xi Jinping, 2017), schools are adopting a problem-based learning approach to education that allows for more innovative thinking (West-Knights, 2017). Educational reformers, perhaps as a backlash from decades of high stakes assessment that measure knowledge acquisition resulting in an emphasis on mimetic instruction in the schools, call for transformations in teaching and learning that puts creative and critical thinking at the forefront (Couros, 2015; Robinson, 2011, Zhao, 2012)

This special issue of *Global Education Review*, dedicated to the theme of creativity, looks at creativity from various angles and lenses that are particularly relevant to education, from the neuroscience on what influences creativity and global views on

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creativity to specific programs that target the development of creativity. Efforts toward nurturing creativity in public schools, higher education and teacher education are represented.

We start with an editorial by James Schreiber titled, *Creativity and Pre-Service Teacher Education: What You See is What You Get*. Schreiber draws on personal and professional experiences from over 20 years working in the educational system to describe the dearth of creativity in both public school settings (“worksheet dungeons”) and teacher preparation programs. He identifies the lack of modeling in teacher education as a contributing factor. He describes the constraints faced by teachers and teacher educators and concludes with solid yet simple recommendations for change.

In *What Cognitive Neuroscience Tells Us about Creativity Education: A Literature Review*, Kai Zhou provides an updated review of the neuroscience research on the relationship between creativity and intelligence. Zhou asserts that, despite important findings in cognitive neuroscience that can enhance classroom practice, there has been little impact of the research on creativity education policy. She points out the need for policy makers to come up with assessment programs that evaluate the effectiveness of creativity education appropriate for culturally diverse student populations.

Jules and Sundberg use the results of their quantitative content analysis of 21st century learning competences to explore the connection between recommendation and reality in their

article, *The Internationalization of Creativity as a Learning Competence*. Based on their analysis, they recommend that creativity and innovation should be included in every subject in order to ensure employability longevity in the intelligent economy.

In *Educational Perspectives from Families of Mixed East and West Educational Background*, Eric Layman explores the perspectives of families who have the option to choose between an educational program from an Eastern Tradition or a Western Tradition. The parents’ conception on the importance of and opportunity for creativity influences their decisions. For parents, the nurturing of creativity appeared to be more important for their high school students than for young students.

In *Cultivating Experimental Innovation within Undergraduate Physics Majors*, Fleenor describes an undergraduate program in physics that went from more didactic traditional instruction to methods that allow for and nurtures creativity. The instructional change resulted in increases in enrollment in physics courses and majors and increased graduation rates of physics majors. Key to the transformation of the physics program was the development of experimental innovation where students were afforded opportunities to follow their interests and take risks in an environment of collaboration with faculty and other students.

Miller uses data from the “Senior Transitions” topical module of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in her article, *The Role of Creative Coursework in Skill Development for University Seniors*, to build on

the research base on creativity training and transferable skills in higher education. The results of her study indicate that creative coursework is a significant positive predictor of confidence in various skills and abilities that would help students prepare for diverse work settings.

Recognizing that opportunities for creativity can be sparse in public school settings, in *Providing Opportunities for Flow Experiences and Creative Problem Solving through Inquiry Based Instruction*, Kristy Doss presents the results of an action research project that involved middle-school students in inquiry-based projects. Students who participated in the Doss study reported higher engagement due to support for their autonomy and opportunity for creative problem solving. Like Fleenor, Doss emphasizes the role that autonomy, following interests, and taking risks play in nurturing creativity.

The articles in this issue tend to support the notion that there is a “Crisis in Creativity” in education while offering insight into the possibilities of environments where creativity flourishes. While there are differing views of what creativity is and why it is important, the authors in this issue tend to agree that creativity needs to be an intentional goal in education. There is also a thread in the articles that suggests that development of creativity involves modeling of the creative process and opportunity for creativity in safe environments where learners are willing and able to take risks, learn from mistakes, collaborate and follow their interests.

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