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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Distinguishing between 'macro' and 'micro' Possibility Thinking: Seen and unseen creativity

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Abstract

This paper proposes a model that describes potential ways in which creativity may be manifest in the classroom. Building on the work by Craft and her colleagues (e.g. Chappell, Craft, Burnard, & Cremin, 2008; Craft, Cremin, Burnard, Dragovic, & Chappell, 2012), this paper uses empirical evidence from the author's PhD study (Clack, 2011), to propose further developments in the 'Possibility Thinking' model. It is argued that it is possible to characterise 'types' of Possibility Thinking activity. The first 'type' identified is 'macro' Possibility Thinking, characterised by 'large', observable events in the classroom. The second type, 'micro' Possibility Thinking, may be characterised as 'smaller', more thoughtful, personal moments that are less visible to an observer. Developing the existing model in this way helps provide insights into the creative process and as a result helps provide insights into how we may foster and develop creativity in the classroom and indeed in everyday life.

Key words: Possibility Thinking, creativity, primary mathematics education

1. Introduction

Creativity has long been seen an important part of the human condition (Hammershøj, 2009) with serious efforts to explore it as an academic field have been undertaken since the middle of the previous century, prompted by what has since been described as Guildford's 'seminal' address (1950) on creativity. Guildford's work led to discussions on creativity particularly in the field of psychology – what constitutes creativity, what drives people to be 'creative', what are the characteristics of 'creative people', how we can be 'more creative' and so on (Mumford, 2003). Discussions about creativity in education have been less sustained, with Craft (2003a) describing three 'waves' of creativity research in the UK since Guildford in the 1950s. The first wave was sparked by the interest in child-centred approaches to teaching and learning prompted by the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Committee for England, 1967). The second wave followed the introduction of a more skills-based curriculum in 1995 (DfEE, 1995) and was accompanied by the National Advisory Committee for Creativity and Cultural Education [NACCCE]'s *All Our Futures* report (1999). This saw education policy promoting imagination and creative problem solving skills alongside core content. A renewed Government interest in creativity in education (e.g. QCA, 2005) in the mid-2000s saw the third wave of interest in creativity research, and it is in this wave in which Craft's work is situated.

It was these discussions in education that moved creativity research away from the psychology-focus and led to the consideration that, perhaps, creativity could be more than the grand world-changing instances of creativity that we all recognise; indeed, creativity may be more culturally or socially situated including in our day-to-day work, play, activity or interactions. This 'type' of creativity has been called variously 'everyday creativity' (e.g. Richards, 1999), 'little c creativity' (e.g. Craft, 2001b) and 'personal creativity' (e.g. Runco, 1996) amongst many others. Nevertheless the central tenet is the same – creativity is not exclusive to certain individuals but is something of which we are all capable. Despite this agreement on the democratic nature of creativity (i.e. that we are all capable of 'being creative') (Banaji & Burn, 2007), there is little consensus on how this day-to-day creativity might be conceptualised or modelled, far less how it

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