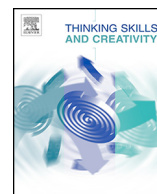




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A third space for dialogues on creative pedagogy: Where hybridity becomes possible



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ABSTRACT

This study proposes a triangular model of creative pedagogy involving three interconnected elements – creative teaching, teaching for creativity, and creative learning. The rationale for this framework was to associate varied yet related insights into fostering creativity and stimulating additional discussion regarding pedagogical strategies for nurturing creativity in the context of educational reform in Asian societies. A teaching project based on this model was designed and conducted in local primary schools in Taiwan, one of the Confucianism societies. As the practice and values behind creative pedagogy can contradict the discourse of local context, this study explored questions of how desirable creativity is, how creative pedagogy should be applied, and how the experience of adopting creative pedagogy is perceived. A descriptive case study approach was employed to explore the research questions. Data were collected from the three perspectives of the participants by pupils' response sheets and diaries, interviews with pupils and local teachers as observers, and the teacher–researcher's reflective journals. The findings showed that there are discrepancies between the pupils and their classroom teachers' views. The majority of the pupils showed their love to the playful learning, whereas the teachers hesitated to welcome the practice. The practitioner–researcher, however, described the initiative as dialogue-triggering, a tug-of-war, and a gap-bridging process. The meaning of resistance and the emergent hybrid practice formed in the third space are discussed in this paper, and insights are offered regarding fostering creativity and adopting creative pedagogy in a similar context.

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1. Introduction

Because of rapid social, economic, and technological changes, creativity has again been recognised as a major aim of education in the last two decades (Craft, 2005; Feldman & Benjamin, 2006). Rather than being the rare gift of prodigies, however, creativity has been reconceptualised as a basic capacity for everyday problem solving as well as competence for success (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education [NACCCE], 1999; Thornburg, 2002; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Creativity has been included in curriculum reform and education policies in Western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, and Australia (Craft, 2005; Feldman & Benjamin, 2006; Shaheen, 2010) as well as in various Asian countries. China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have also implemented curriculum reforms with an emphasis on the development of creativity (Cheng, 2011; Choe, 2006; Lin, 2011).

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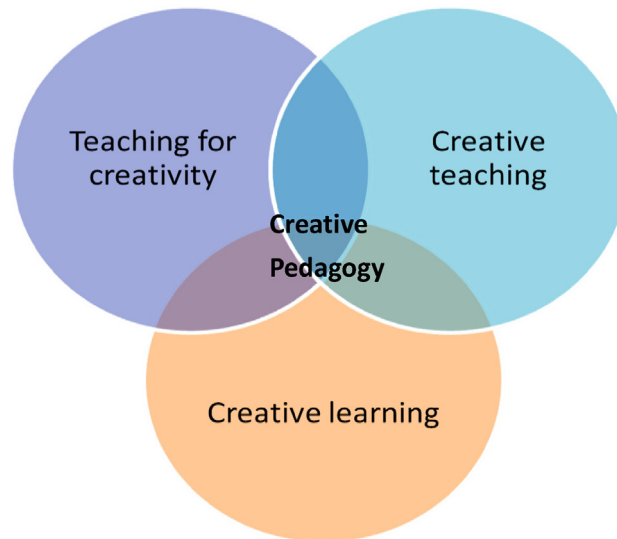


Fig. 1. The three elements of creative pedagogy.

Although creative education has been actively promoted in many Asian countries, little discussion has addressed the creative qualities to be developed or the pedagogical strategies for nurturing creativity in top-down reforms (Cheng, 2011; Choe, 2006; Lin, 2011). The main focus of creative education and research remains measuring creativity and proving the effectiveness of teaching. The issue of how compatible local educational values are with the objective of enhancing creativity or how creativity can be fostered by everyday practice in an Asian context have not been examined. Moreover, due to different research approaches to creativity, the theories and insights of enhancing creativity developed in Western societies have resulted in the creation of varied terms and distinctions. The confluence approach which integrates multiple factors of creativity development (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999), has led to a conceptual framework of creative pedagogy that offers a more holistic view of pedagogical principles for nurturing everyday creativity. This framework comprises two distinctive views of enhancing creativity, creative teaching and teaching for creativity (NACCCE, 1999), and children's creative and active learning, which is often neglected in the pedagogical research (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999).

Based on this framework, a teaching project was designed and conducted to address the questions unasked. Utilising a descriptive case study approach obtained in-depth understanding of the possible tensions, responses, and changes during the process of adopting creative pedagogy into Taiwanese classrooms. Before the research findings are presented, this paper will elaborate on the rationale for the triangular model, explain the issues of adopting theories and practices of enhancing creativity into an Asian context, and discuss the phenomena observed and implications drawn.

1.1. Rationale of creative pedagogy

Because of different research approaches to creativity, theories and insights concerning enhancing creativity can be discussed from three viewpoints, namely, *innovative teaching or stimulating teaching*, *stimulating environment*, and *supportive teacher ethos* (Lin, 2011). Although focused on different dimensions, the assumptions behind these aspects of creativity development are not necessarily contradictory. To associate various yet connected insights into fostering creativity, as well as to challenge practices that merely emphasise knowledge transmission and overlook learner agency, a triangular model of creative pedagogy was proposed. The model involves three interconnected elements—creative teaching, teaching for creativity, and creative learning, which compliment and result in one another, creating a resonant teaching and learning process rather than a situation in which teaching and learning are two parallel lines that rarely meet. It is everyday creativity and “possibility thinking” (Craft, 2005, 2007) that the pedagogical principles of this model seek to facilitate (Fig. 1).

The first element of this model, *creative teaching*, highlights teachers' creative endeavour in designing and teaching lessons by “using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective” (NACCCE, 1999, p. 102). In addition, the creative teaching in this model is considered analogous to the idea of “teaching as art” (Eisner, 1979) and “teaching as improvisational performance” (Sawyer, 2004, 2011) that embrace the emergent nature of the teaching and learning process. The second element, *teaching for creativity*, focuses more on the objectives and strategies of developing learners' creative capacities. Strategies such as using a pragmatic approach to enhance creativity and pedagogical principles such as standing back, profiling learner agency, and creating time and space (Cremin, Burnard, & Craft, 2006) are considered the core methods of developing creative capacities. Despite having different foci, these two elements of creative pedagogy are deemed interconnected. A supportive ethos for nurturing creativity can be observed in both practices; in one practice, a supportive ethos is created by a teacher's enthusiasm and creativity whereas in the other, a supportive ethos is established

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