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Promoting Creativity in Children with Digital Technology to Overcome Inequalities in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Early childhood education is the education given to children at the preschool, nursery schools and training (practicum) which is the foundation to other levels of education. Creativity is an essential part of learning which the children are anticipated to be exposed to from their early stage. Creativity is embedded in the curriculum for children in early childhood education to give room for a rich learning experience and to help healthy growth and a wholistic development of the child, to make sure that no child is left behind even with the application of digital technology in teaching creativity innovation. Early childhood teachers are expected to teach the children with relevant and up-to-date materials such as the use of technology to activate their imagination, sense of belonging to bridge the cap of inequalities among the children which will help in appreciating children's individuality and encourage participation without discrimination amongst the children. This paper therefore, looked into promoting creativity in children with digital technology without leaving any child behind. Based on this, the paper suggested among others that the use of digital technology should be encouraged in early childhood, no discrimination of any type and all the children should be treated equally.

***Keywords*:** creativity, children, Inequalities, technology, early childhood

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Introduction

An intelligent and creative people are needed in the present society which technology has taken over in all areas of education. One of the most pressing challenges that requires attention is creativity in the context of technology. According to Arnold (2003) and Bruce (2004), engaging kids in creative activities fosters their developing talents to think of new ideas, articulate them, recognize issues, and solve such problems. According to Donahoe and Gaynor (2007), activities that allow for creativity and imagination are what lead to youngsters accepting diverse types of thinking, which in turn leads to innovation through the processing of unique ideas and experiences. According to Bamford and Burke (2005), there is pleasure in being creative, and this is a fundamental component in children's learning and in bringing out their intrinsic creative qualities with their interest to interact more and more with creativity and therefore become highly creative.

Various forms of abilities and information are transferred to students, preparing them to try their professions and obligations in their reality. Scientists agree that the pre-school years are a fantastic time for imagination. Inventiveness can assist children understand their general surroundings and develop connections between its pieces, as well as increase their adaptability, creative mind, and problem-solving talents (Benlliure, Meléndez & Ballesteros 2013). The facts may suggest that certain people are more interested in inventive action than others; yet, there is logical proof that our minds can develop an original thinking cycle by executing specified actions. This means that anyone can develop their inventive capacity through imaginative activities, implying that inventiveness begins in childhood and becomes consistent during pre-adulthood.

Conceptual Clarifications

Concepts of Creativity

Numerous research have offered various definitions of creativity. Paul (2005) asserts that there is no common concept of creativity across disciplines and that there are differing viewpoints regarding the importance of creativity in early childhood education. The definitions and descriptions of creativity vary, as may be seen from a review of the literature. Another misconception about creativity is that it is exclusively connected to the creation of art (ibid.). Indeed, being creative is not just restricted to performing arts, fine art, or music. Numerous researchers have pinpointed the creative process in fields like science, math, economics,

innovation, and even commonplace abilities like cooking, computing, designing, and so forth (Armga, Dillon, Jamsek, Morgan, Peyton, & Speranza 2002). One definition of "creativity" refers to the characteristics of unique, inventive, workable, and beneficial solutions (Ministry of Education in Thailand, 2016). (Maxwell, 2013) defines creativity as a person's behaviors to master a skill and produce creative results. This refers to the individual's characteristics and activities, which are connected to the inventive strategy and results that might happen in the classroom.

The concepts of common imagination - sometimes known as little-c, or common inventiveness - are obviously derived from English education, when scholars sparked a debate about whether all people can be creative (Specialty et. al., 2007). Recognize little-c imagination as the ability to use knowledge, creative thinking, and self-articulation in daily life, as well as being driven by the prospective outcomes of reasoning. Meanwhile, Duffy (2006) defined imagination as a "process of aware growth" that shows "the cleverness of ordinary people as opposed to phenomenal givers" by applying "probability sensation," which asks whether and is used to distinguish arrangements in all contexts. Richard (2010) affirmed that ordinary imagination is associated with "human creativity at work and relaxation across the various activities of daily existence" and is "essential to human endurance and... found in everyone."

To (Nami et al., 2014), inventiveness denotes the ability to "make", "create" or "imaginative strength" and "produce new works". It is a slightly different idea, particularly related to the concept of creative mind. Meanwhile, another researcher (Saif, 2008) defines imagination as the ability to think about things in new ways in order to achieve unusual and unique solutions to problems. The child, on his way to becoming an adult, learns the tasks of maturity and shapes his own identity during his childhood. Inventiveness is the ability to create something fresh through innovative abilities. It is a psychological cycle that includes the age of new ideas. Arya & Lokesh (2016) Individuals' abilities and working styles allude to their ability to generate original ideas and products. This obviously relates to notions of innovation as an interaction with new approaches, bits of knowledge, points of view, and viewpoints on specific situations (Eragamreddy, 2013).

Creativity in Children

When considering imagination in children, a broad, popularity-based definition of creativity is appropriate. With this in mind, any child could be deemed to have the potential for imaginative articulation. It is crucial to analyze what constitutes 'creativity' in the work of a child. In the

meantime, only a young wonder might be expected to invent something fresh and significant to society. Overall, each child's innovative abilities might be linked to his or her own revolutionary phase. For example, a child's work may be diverse and unique to that child, or it may correspond to children in their age group or bracket (Runco, 2003).

Another suggestion for adapting the concept of creativity to suit children is to emphasize the original strategy rather than passing judgment on the quality of their 'things.' This is because children may not have developed all of the abilities required to achieve an effective inventive result Specialty (2003), Tegano, Moran, and Sawyers (1991), and this declaration is supported by Malaguzzi (1993).

"*Creativity becomes more visible when adults try to be more attentive*

to the cognitive processes of children than to the results they achieve

in various fields of doing and understanding".

The aforementioned information was adapted from the Reggio Emilia approach, which has fascinated many people with the nature of creative "things" made by young children.

Importance of Creativity in Children

The development of creativity in children in the early stage of the children enables them to develop their unique ideas and personalize their learning as early as possible (Prentice, 2000). This is supported by the children's' normal demeanor to be expressive, curious, and innovative. At the early stage in the children's life, they are very inquisitive to everything happening around them and want to explore. Because of their ability to use several senses when experimenting with novel methods of thinking, new thoughts and connections are made possible (Amabile, 2001). Children's curiosity and passion are the motivating factors that make it possible for them to think and act in new ways when confronted with uncertain or strange circumstances. Finally, fostering and developing one's creative potential begins in early childhood. A crucial component of children's education is encouraging their inventiveness. Creative activities, such as problem solving, creative art, or creative exploration, are critical for encouraging intellectual development, which includes the ability to critique, create broad viewpoints, and enable new methods of thinking (Craft, 2005). Thus, it is apparent that stimulating children's creativity is a critical component for developing their potential, key life skills, and overall mental well-being.

Fig. 1: Children demonstrating Creativity
Source: gnuworld.co.za

Fig.2:A Child demonstrating Creativity
Source: istockphoto.com

Fig. 3: Act of creativity with parent (Creativity Activity)
Source: dreamstime.com

Fig. 4: Working together
Source: businessafricaonlin.com

Fig. 5 Creativity in action
Source: dreamstime.com

Concepts of Early Childhood/Children

Early childhood education (ECE) is considered to be provided to children between the ages of 0 and 8. This level serves as a foundation for all children. Every country is required to prioritize early childhood education to ensure that no child falls behind at any stage of development. Early childhood education, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2018), is a branch of education concerned with the formal and informal education of children from birth to the age of eight.

Concept of Technology

Every country is currently undergoing a technological revolution, and even young children are expected to be digitally sophisticated due to their status as computer geeks. Nigeria, a country of roughly 200 million people, is no exception, with young children constituting nearly 30% of the population. According to Arnseth and Hatlevik (2012), technology is the use of computer-based communication that allows technology to be used in ordinary classroom instruction. According to the European Association, the use of computerized innovation in education is yet to be fully implemented in many countries (EU 2013). The use of innovative technology in education is critical for students of all ages, and no child should be left behind. Gbenga-Akanmu and Jegede (2015) stated that pupils from all groups should benefit from the use of technology. (Gbenga-Akanmu and Lawal, 2022) stated that many educators were not using online technology for teaching and that there was limited network connection for teachers to use technology in Youth. Technology, according to Olowe and Kutelu (2014), helps kids develop a variety of cognitive skills, including creativity. The employment of digital technology in early childhood education is not favored by educators (Olowe, John & Okorafor 2018). This demonstrates the importance of digital technology in learning in general and education in particular. As a result, it is critical that learners be not encouraged to engage in inequality.

Concepts of Inequalities

Children have been identified as critical areas of strength for a to overcome any issues between the pattern of neediness and successful means to lay out the reason for additional learning, to build value of results and abilities (Ajayi 2019); as a result, Nigeria embraced the possibility of ECCE and it became a public plan by incorporating it into the public strategy. The purpose of this is to lay the groundwork for open and equitable access to education for all young people across the country, regardless of disability, orientation, nationality, or financial means. The National Policy on Education was reviewed in 2004 and 2014, and the Coordinated Youth Advancement (IECD) plan was formed in 2007 to allow for the consolidation of youth care and training in all of the country's current grade schools. This has been acknowledged by the national government. This means that every child, regardless of gender, country, religion, or physical restrictions, should have the right to attend school. This shows that the government was concerned with the balance of education, which should begin in primary school. As a result, the comprehensive subtitle

"Leave no Nigerian Behind" was established for Nigeria's Vision (Jayesimi, 2015; The Administration, 2015).

Inequalities, according to Woodhead, Dornan, and Murray (2012), encompass differences in both home circumstances and child outcomes that are related to disability, ethnicity, gender, rural-urban location, and resources. They went on to say that inequalities are frequently linked to social exclusion of some groups from enjoying what others do. Any culture or nation that wishes to progress must make every effort to eradicate this act. As a result, this is the primary purpose of the worldwide agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With education as the engine of the goal, it is positioned as SDG 4 stressing the need to promote equal access to all levels of education, including early childhood education, which has been acknowledged as one of the most cost-effective strategies to achieve sustainable development (Britto, 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, our society places a great priority on creativity. It promotes ingenuity, invention, greater thinking ability, cultural and social transformation, political development, and economic advancement. It has a quick and effective response that aids in the achievement of life goals while also allowing for enjoyment in the process. It is therefore recommended that creativity should be encouraged at early childhood stage, provisions that will erase inequalities should be made available by the schools and the government should provide the schools with enough amenities such as computers with relevant applications that will aid creativity learning in the schools.

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