



Creativity in Education: Fostering Creativity in the Classroom Using Creative Teaching Methods

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Abstract

It is essential to have an understanding that there is no one definition of creativity that is capable of encompassing all of the thoughts and discoveries related to creativity. The aim of this study is to analyze teachers' perceptions about creativity in education in the context of Albanian schools through a questionnaire distributed to different schools around Albania. The research questions investigated in this study are as following: 1) How do teachers perceive creativity? 2) How to foster creativity in the classroom? 3) What do teachers need to grow their skills in creative teaching? The results of the study, which were based on data provided by educators working in elementary and secondary schools, showed a broad picture of their perceptions regarding creativity, the dimensions of creativity in education, and the barriers they face when attempting to implement creative teaching.

Key words: *Creativity, Education, Questionnaire, Perception, Albania, Creative teaching.*

Introduction

In the recent years, there has been a significant focus placed on, and incentive for, teaching at the different levels of education, starting from kindergartens and primary schools to shift away from the conventional "chalk and talk" teaching technique and toward a more imaginative and

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forward-thinking instructional approach. In order to develop this transformation, which also featured critical thinking, the Albanian Education Ministry has established a number of training programs in addition to modifications in curriculum and assessment practices. In order to expedite this shift, a number of different policies, in addition to significant expenditures in infrastructure and money, have been established. As a result, it is very necessary to conduct an investigation into the degree to which creative education has really been carried out and into the perceptions of creativity that Albanian educators now hold.

First and foremost, the purpose of this thesis is to discuss the numerous aspects of creative teaching that have been thought about and documented lately. Second, the purpose of this thesis is to have an exploration on the challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome in order to successfully apply creative teaching in the classroom. Concerns about creative teaching and learning are one example of this. These concerns extend beyond the realm of pedagogy to include not just the subject matter but also the ways in which students learn. In order to determine whether or not creative teaching is effective, it is necessary to take into account a number of teacher and student characteristics, such as attitudes and perceptions.

The results of the study, which were based on data provided by educators working in elementary and secondary schools, provide us with a picture of their perceptions regarding creativity, the dimensions of creativity in education, and the barriers they face when attempting to implement creative teaching. It is proposed that additional research utilizing instructors at various levels of education may shed more light on the validity and reliability of this instrument and the results. This is due to the fact that the study only gathered a relatively small number of responses. At this stage, we are keeping it as simple as possible; nevertheless, pedagogical, curricular, and policy ramifications based on the results may be explored.

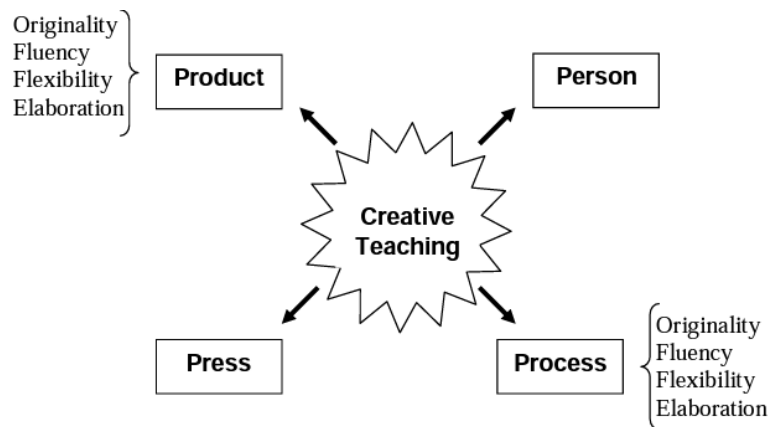
The purpose of this study is twofold: to investigate the perception of creativity of Albanian teachers and to explore barriers that exist to creative teaching. Main objectives identified throughout the research process are: 1) Emphasizing the importance and impact that creativity has in education; 2) Investigating the perception that teachers have on creativity; 3) Exploring ways of creating support for teacher to grow their skills in game-based learning and creative teaching; 4) Identifying best practices to foster creativity in the classroom; 5) Exploring the dimensions of creativity in education; 6) Investigating barriers that exist to creative teaching. The research

questions investigated in this study are as following: 1) How do teachers perceive creativity? 2) How to foster creativity in the classroom? 3) What do teachers need to grow their skills in creative teaching?

Literature Review - Creativity in Education

2.1 Definitions of Creativity

It is essential to have an understanding that there is no one definition of creativity that is capable of encompassing all of the thoughts and discoveries that have been made about what creativity is. Its significance may be interpreted differently depending on who you ask. To the musicians, it is the creation of some music that has never been heard before but is attractive, and to the painters, it is the portrayal of an uncommon mood or tale via the use of colors and figures. It is possible that physicists may see it as an innovative and beneficial innovation or discovery on par with Einstein's general theory of relativity. Nevertheless, these many interpretations of creativity point to an underlying truth, which is that creativity involves a number of things, including the invention of ideas that are brilliant, unique, and helpful.



Rhodes (1961) organized the plethora of different definitions of creativity into four distinct areas, which he referred to as 1) Process, 2) Person, 3) Press, and 4) Products. Definitions of "process" often focus on describing the many phases of creative processes that take place inside the mind of the artist. It is a way of behaving that is geared toward the accomplishment of creative goals. Some meanings of "person" relate to the potential for creative accomplishment, in which creativity is considered as a collection of traits of the person. In these definitions, "person" refers

to the capacity for creative success. Definitions of "product" pertain to the final product, which is the location of manifestations of an individual's creative abilities. Definitions of "press" relate to the environmental circumstances that must be present in order for creative activity to take place. One can see that creative teaching can also be examined using this categorization of creativity. This is something that can be observed.

It has been hypothesized that creative individuals think in a variety of distinct ways during the course of their thought processes. Herman Helmholtz, a German biologist and physicist, is credited with having one of the first ideas. Graham Wallas, in his book titled *The Art of Thought* (1926), reported on Helmholtz's study, which included one of the oldest ideas. It was hypothesized that the creative process may be broken down into four stages: preparation, incubation, inspiration (illumination), and verification. During the stage of preparation, you will be required to observe, listen to, ask questions of, read, gather, compare, contrast, analyze, and draw connections between a wide variety of things and information. The thinking about pieces, connections, and reasoning that takes place during the incubation stage might take place either consciously or unconsciously. After a time of incubation, known as the fallow period, during which tensions are removed and one is able to be creative, one may experience moments of inspiration or illumination. The phase of verification is characterized by arduous labor and focuses on the process of materializing a concept.

2.2 Dimensions of creativity in education

When students are able to use their imagination and critical thinking to develop new and meaningful types of notions thanks to the classroom setting created by the teacher and the school, as well as when students are able to take risks, be independent, and be flexible, we can see a great example of what creativity in education looks like here. Students in this kind of classroom are not instructed to just recap what they have already learned; rather, they are guided through the process of honing their capacity to provide a variety of answers to a question.

In most cases, creative educators look for one-of-a-kind educational opportunities that will assist them in developing a global awareness of the education system and will satisfy their curiosity about the operation of the educational system in both our own country and in other countries. In addition, these educators receive first-hand understanding of the varied educational expectations that their students' families bring into the classroom with them for their children. When it's done

well, creative teaching centers on discovering new ways to "make learning visible," encourage inquiry, actively involve students, foster their own creativity, and stretch their ability to produce original and high-quality work. In its most basic form, creative teaching is a form of active learning.

Because it fosters cognitive complexity, creativity has a lot to offer in the realm of education. It depends on having in-depth information and being able to successfully use that knowledge. To be creative is to make use of an existing set of information or abilities in a specific topic or environment in order to experiment with new possibilities in the pursuit of desirable results, so growing both one's knowledge and one's skills. It is something that grows with time and is more likely to be effective if individuals begin the creative process at a moment when they already have some knowledge and abilities under their belts.

2.3 Characteristics of a creative teacher

There is no question that becoming a teacher is one of the most challenging careers a person could pursue. The role of the teacher is to act as a mediator between the student and the student's reality, and this role involves more than just teaching. Because of an expanded awareness of the nature of creativity as a unique process, susceptible to training, and historical events that led to educational reform and new methods, stressing giftedness and creative ties, the idea that instructors should be involved in promoting the development of creativity in students is a notion that progressively emerged through time. This greater understanding of the nature of creativity as a distinct process, amenable to training, is what prompted these advances.

Let's begin our examination of the factors that contribute to creative thinking in education by focusing on one of the most crucial figures: the educator. A teacher's creativity encompasses the ability to evaluate ideas, choose the most useful ones while discarding the others, and maintain mental flexibility, which we may describe as the capacity to see an issue from a variety of perspectives and to shift focus from one problem to another. The analysis of the profile of a creative teacher may be broken down into four distinct categories: personal qualities, community, method, and results. The creative processes of educators are the result of the interplay between their personal qualities and the communities in which they work and live. These personal characteristics include personal intelligences, motivation, and values. The outputs of these processes might take on a broad range of forms. It is important to point out that creativity is not merely a vague notion

that is hard to comprehend and use in real life. For instance, in order to be considered a creative educator, one must have strong classroom management abilities, as well as the ability to assure appropriate student conduct, productive study and work habits, and a general atmosphere of respect inside the classroom. "Even though he may not be aware of it, the teacher, himself, is creative in the sense that he is creating an environment as he arranges, organizes, interprets, asks, or directs. This is true even if he does not realize it. The first step for a teacher in creating an environment that fosters creativity is to acknowledge the disparities that exist between his own world and that of the students in his class. When it comes to assisting children in the formation of their own self-concepts, he has to be conscious of the impact that his own attitudes and actions have. (Boos, R.,1971).

These instructors have the ability to develop positive connections with their classes, which is one of the most crucial talents they possess. In addition to laying out explicit goals for each session and making it a priority to achieve those goals during the course of each lesson, creative instructors also have engaging personalities and methods of instruction. It is not as important to have all the answers as it is to ask the proper questions in this situation. They are able to keep the attention of the children throughout any conversation, are positive role models for the students that they are responsible for, and search for ways to demonstrate that they care about the students via their actions rather than just their words. "In the majority of research studies, a creative teacher or a teacher's creativity is viewed as a capability, habit, or professional feature, which is related to a teacher's courage to take risks in order to create unpredictable learning situations for students in order to promote their autonomy and self-confidence" (Morais & Azevedo, 2011).

The qualities of a creative teacher are not confined to the confines of the classroom setting alone; rather, these qualities extend to the connection the teacher develops with the students' parents as well. These educators retain an open line of contact with the parents of their students and ensure that the parents are kept abreast of what is occurring in the classroom with regard to curricular matters, disciplinary matters, and other concerns. They put themselves in a position to receive phone calls, in-person meetings, and email communications. First and foremost, creative instructors are those that are really enthusiastic about their work with students. They are enthusiastic about having an effect on the lives of kids and are aware of the significance of their role.

2.4 Characteristics of creative learner

The learner, often known as the student, is the second most crucial piece of this massive jigsaw that consists of several components of creative thinking in education. When it comes to examining the qualities shared by creative learners, we will need to investigate a number of different factors, including personality, cognitive and emotional, creative self-efficacy, and active engagement in social networks variables. A person's openness to new experiences, their curiosity, their desire to explore the unknown, and their capacity to endure ambiguity are all aspects of their personality. While effort and perseverance are examples of cognitive and emotional factors, the capacity to develop a wide range of ideas, to question and critically reflect on one's own thinking, and to integrate ideas drawn from a number of sources are examples of cognitive and affective variables.

Learners who are creative are able to bring order out of chaos and unearth hidden meanings buried in knowledge. Learning to think critically and do research are essential skills for creative learners. In the same way that food nourishes the stomach, information nourishes the brain. The creative self-efficacy, also known as the belief in one's potential to confront obstacles and to persevere, as well as the willingness to take intellectual risks, are two characteristics that are especially crucial. 'Flow,' a term coined by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), refers to a state of intrinsic drive, engagement, and intense attention. All three of these factors are essential. And when it comes to the final variable, active participation in social networks, it has been identified as important to enhance creative potential in studies drawing on educational data mining techniques and self-reported creativity scores. This is because active participation in social networks has been identified as important for enhancing creative potential.

In addition to this, creative learners often think independently and beyond the box as they pursue their education. They often find themselves lagging behind the rest of the party as they pick up feathers, buttons, and various other trinkets for their collection while simultaneously considering possible use for the items. They like constructing things and creating in a wide variety of mediums, so you could find them interested in Legos, art, music, theatre, or even blocks. These learners, when they are at a young age, take their toys beyond their intended purpose and utilize classic toys like trains and dolls to come up with new and unique games and worlds. This occurs because these learners are creative thinkers. Learners who are creative are autonomous, and although they may not explicitly dispute established norms, it is not uncommon to see them following the beat of their own drum and existing in a world of their own creation.

In order for our students and graduates to be prepared for the future and to have satisfying professional lives, the curriculum that we use must provide them the tools to cultivate an awareness of ethical issues as well as a broad range of characteristics, talents, and behaviors. To make it possible for students to engage in creative learning, we must first purposefully cultivate a set of characteristics that can be seen in the students' ability to effectively communicate about themselves and their ideas; to be receptive to feedback and new insights; and to confidently put their learning to use in ways that make it possible for them to adapt to and thrive in a variety of different situations and scenarios. Students demonstrate these characteristics when they are able to do the following: communicate effectively about themselves and their ideas;

2.5 Characteristics of creative classroom

Classrooms that foster creativity are ones that are oriented on the students in the class and in which the instructor acts more as a "guide by the side" rather than a "sage on the stage." This strategy calls for in-depth knowledge of the subject area, smart teaching, and an attitude that welcomes the unexpected. The shift in the roles that instructors play and the dynamic of the classroom might have a significant impact. Students are far more willing to share their unique perspectives and creative solutions, and as a result, they acquire knowledge much more rapidly. On the other hand, there is a widespread misunderstanding that creativity in the classroom has anything to do with the arts. As was said previously, a teacher may play a significant role in fostering creative thinking among their pupils. In spite of this, originality and thinking beyond the box are essential components of creativity.

A good learning environment will always include some creative components, which will make the courses more engaging and participatory for the students. Students are helped to be imaginative as well as encouraged to learn new things when the appropriate amount of creativity is mixed in with the curriculum. In addition to enhancing their emotional and social capabilities, students have the opportunity to mature into effective communicators. Students' educational experiences and the way they put what they learn into practice may be profoundly altered by the presence of creativity in the classroom. In point of fact, the emotional growth of a pupil is significantly impacted by their capacity for creative expression.

“The classroom climate should nurture an appetite for the unknown. It should be joyful and comfortable. It should foster balance between the mastery of subject matter and method. It should

engender originality as well as work habits, which are of the utmost importance to self-realization. It must be future oriented and such that the principal agent is the student not the teacher. It should result from multi- faceted approaches to problem solving and from the combination of various patterns of learning.” (Boos, 1971).

2.6 Characteristics of creative school

Each kid completes the majority of his or her development while attending school within the framework of a group, which either promotes to or inhibits this development. It is essential for the group life to make its contribution, even though the school should become aware of alternative methods of working with the individual. Every student has the opportunity to benefit from unique and enriched experiences of creative learning, as well as a wide variety of different changes and structured opportunities for developing their creativity if the school is considered to be creative. A creative school is a place that consists of some critical and vital mature factors.

The innovative school has to have a contemporary system that monitors its progress and organizes the help it receives from the community. In these schools, instructors adhere to protocols for training and advancement, and there is no centralization of the management systems; instead, the management systems are run in a participatory manner. Leadership, community, and local power are the pillars around which a creative school is built. For a creative school to have these qualities, the leadership must have a change-oriented mindset, the community must support the change, and the management's foundation must be cooperation.

It is essential that this point be driven home to people on a consistent basis: changes to teaching practices and institutional structures in schools do not, on their own, guarantee the birth of a creative educational environment. The individuality of the instructor and his/her character is the most important consideration. “The creative schools must allow the child to err without recriminations and must continue to offer strong support. Support in this sense does not mean shielding the child from the consequences of his actions, but perhaps, protecting him from making choices the consequences of which will be more than he can bear” (Boos, 1971).

2.7 Creative teaching

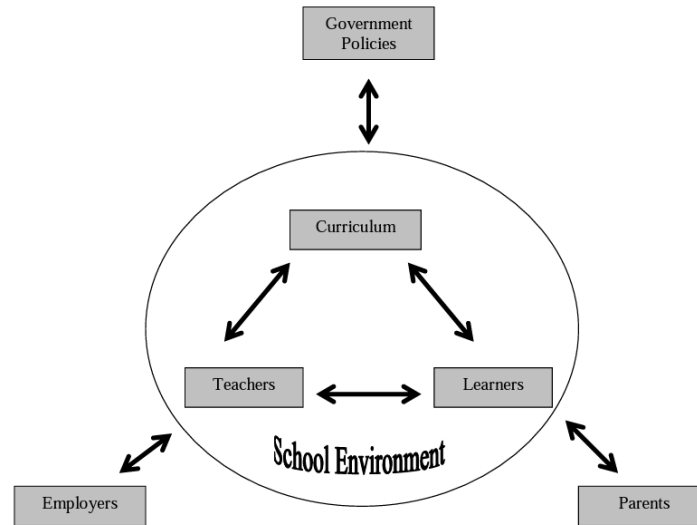
There are many different definitions of creative teaching. The majority of the definitions have concentrated on the process of teaching creativity, that is, instructing students in creative

thinking with the intention of encouraging students to develop their own creative thinking skills. One further facet of creative teaching, namely teaching in a creative manner, has been overlooked in the concept of creative teaching. This facet of creative teaching is known as teaching creatively. The purpose of this thesis is to provide a picture of creative teaching, which will include teaching creativity as well as teaching creatively.

Creative teaching is defined for the purposes of this thesis as the process of introducing creative processes and components of creativity into the teaching process. This definition will be used throughout this thesis. In addition to this, it takes into account the creative personality traits of the instructor as well as the creative thought processes that he or she employs while formulating the instructional tactics that are used to improve learning and inspire student motivation. An example of inventive teaching would be a music instructor that utilizes many tape recorders to explain to their pupils the developing portion of Beethoven's "Eroica," which the students have struggled to comprehend (Rubin, 1985).

The act of creating and organizing education in such a manner as to enhance thinking abilities, particularly creative thinking skills among students, is referred to as teaching creativity. This method is described as the process of teaching creativity. For instance, instructors who are teaching creativity to promote originality in thinking in a language class may ask students to rework an ending to a narrative they are familiar with or come up with a fresh conclusion for a story they like reading.

A model of creative teaching is offered here, with its foundation in the definition of creative teaching presented above. It takes a systems approach to investigating creative and innovative pedagogy in the classroom. With the help of this holistic approach, educators and trainers will be able to guarantee that the model is successful in evaluating not just creative teaching but also the elements that have an effect on creative teaching.



Creative teaching System (Palaniappan, 2004).

A prerequisite for the development of creative learning. During the process of creative teaching, the instructor sparks the interest of the students in the subject matter being studied, and then guides the students to find creative solutions to the problem on their own. Alternatively, the instructor may present specific problems and ask the students to apply a variety of different resources in order to find the most satisfying creative solution.

The practice of instructing in a creative and helpful manner that fosters student development in relation to the development of original thinking and action. The practice of creative teaching places equal emphasis on a teacher's instructional strategies, as well as the overall impact those strategies have on their pupils and the results they generate for the classroom as a whole.

Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study was carried out as a quantitative study with participants chosen through convenient sampling procedure. This design was chosen because it allowed for the measurement of facts, such as teacher perceptions on creativity and barriers to creative teaching. This approach provided the researcher with several possibilities to collect data through questionnaires in a primary and secondary school. It used statistical approaches and presented the results in an objective manner. The survey approach includes identifying a demographic, choosing participant,

designing survey questions, and collecting and evaluating data. Each of these stages will be discussed in depth in the next sections of this chapter.

3.2 Setting

This study was conducted in one of the Primary and Secondary schools of Burrel, a small town in the north of Albania. The reason I chose this schools is primary because I have been working there for most of my life and also wanted to put into light the difficulties that teachers face when it comes to developing and implementing creative teaching skills in classrooms in such small towns as Burrel where sometimes they might face judgment from the community for bringing something different to the table when it comes to education.

3.3 Participants

The survey was implemented at one of the Primary and Secondary school of Burrel. There were selected 14 teachers, each with a different level of expertise. Participants in the research were chosen at random from a pool of primary and secondary teachers. This study includes teachers with experience in teaching that starts from 6 years and goes up to 32 years of experience. Also the subject that they teach is chosen to be as diverse as possible including primary school teacher, Science, arts, English etc. This was done in purpose, first to secure a diverse in approaches and second to be able to study how the experience and the subject an educator teaches, does affect their answers.

3.4. Research instruments

A questionnaire was used to collect the data needed for the survey. Using a questionnaire was advantageous as it made it possible to have high accessibility in very short time. The current study relies on a questionnaire made of statements around creativity where the participants had to agree or not with the given statement or in some cases choose from the different options presented in the question. The questions are not created originally by me but rather a set of 16 questions is collected and compiled based on the feedback received previously on the different teacher forums I am part of, discussions with different colleagues on the matter and also based on the personal observations.

3.5 Method of analysis

The participants were given 30 minutes to complete all of the survey questions. The records set changed into imported for extra evaluation whilst the records accumulating changed into completed. Based on the research questions provided in the thesis's first chapter, the data was sorted and examined. Quantitative data analysis techniques were used to examine the questionnaires. The findings of the data analysis were then analyzed in details.

3.6. Data collection and procedures

After the headmaster approved that the survey could take place in the school, the questionnaire was shared with the chosen 14 individuals. Most of them know English but for those who faced difficulties the questionnaire was translated to Albanian but also assistance was given during the whole period of completing the questionnaire.

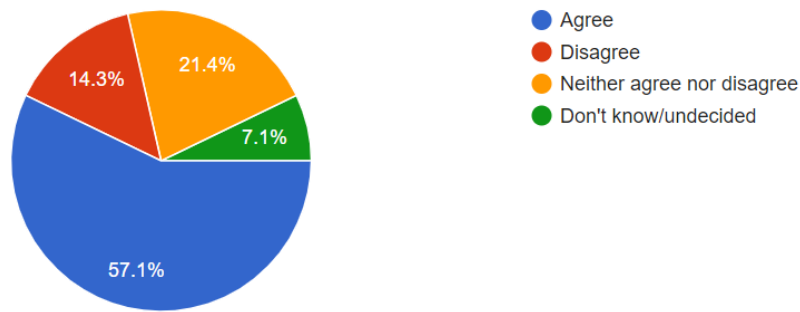
Results

This section presents a detailed analysis of the teachers' perceptions regarding creativity in education and also investigating the barriers to creative teaching. As it is seen below, the results show that there might be some misconceptions when it comes to defining creativity and who is responsible for nurturing it in students. Also, when it comes to the barriers, it seems that there exist guidelines from education authorities but the practical side is what is missing.

4.1 Creativity perceptions

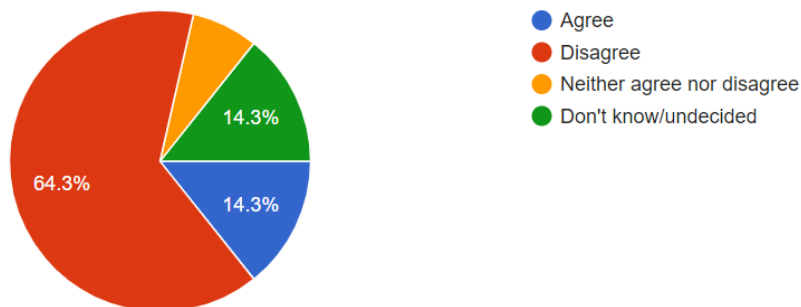
This set of questions is formulated to investigate the perception that teachers have on creativity. They are introduced with a set of statements and had to choose if they agree or not with the given statement.

1. Creativity is a gift to individuals that can be nurtured in certain settings.



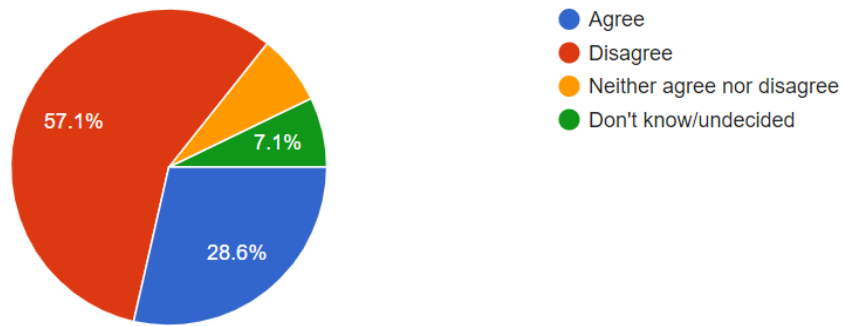
Results show that the majority of the participants do think that creativity is a gift and that can be nurtured in certain settings. What's interesting here is that the second largest group are not the ones who disagree but rather the ones who don't take a stance on the the given matter, they neither agree nor disagree. Those who agree make up 57.1% while those who neither agree nor disagree are 21.4% of the participants.

2. Creativity is inborn and cannot be developed



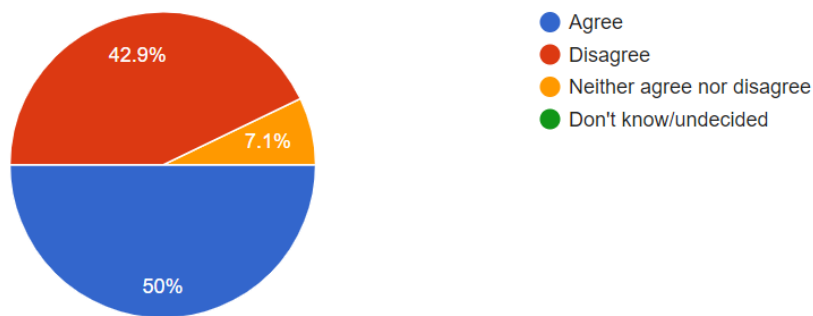
The second statement is to some extent the opposite of the first one as it implies that creativity is inborn and cannot be developed. It's good to see that 64.3% of the participants disagree with this as it means they are more willing to use methods to teach creativity in the classroom. Whatsoever, I see it a bit concerning that in this small group of participants there's a considerable amount of 14.3% that agree with the statement.

3. Acquiring basic skills is more important than fostering creativity

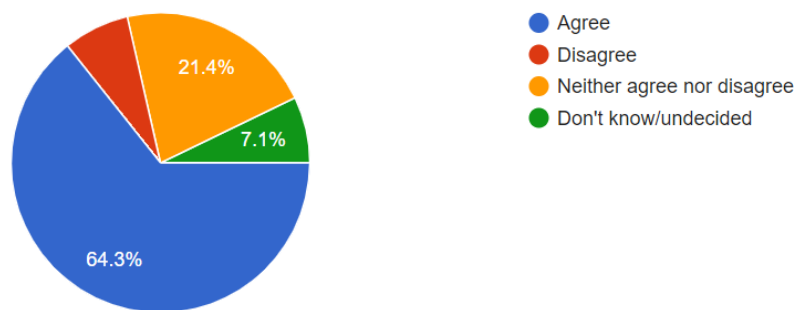


Deciding if acquiring basic skills is more important than fostering creativity led to having 57.1% of participants disagreeing with the statement

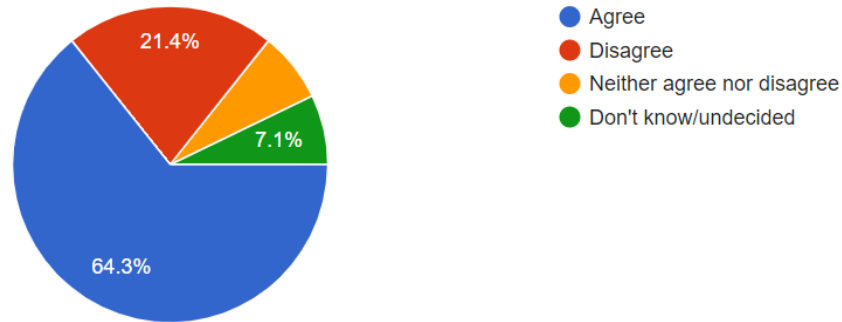
4. Teachers should include the assessment of creativity when designing assessment tasks



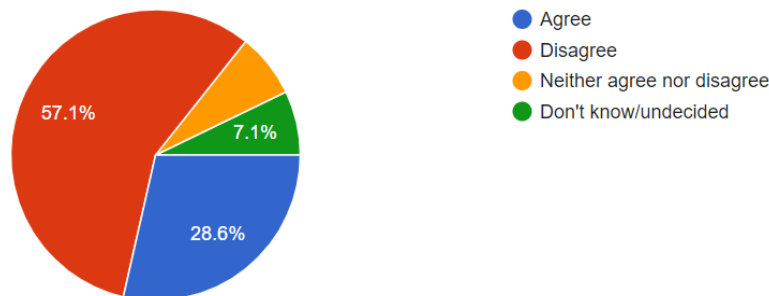
5. Developing students' creativity is key responsibility of Arts teacher



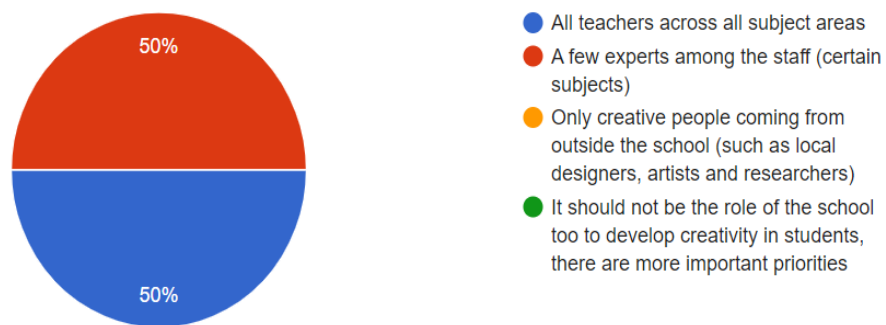
6. Developing students' creativity is a key responsibility of Primary teachers



7. Creativity refers only to music performance or creating artworks



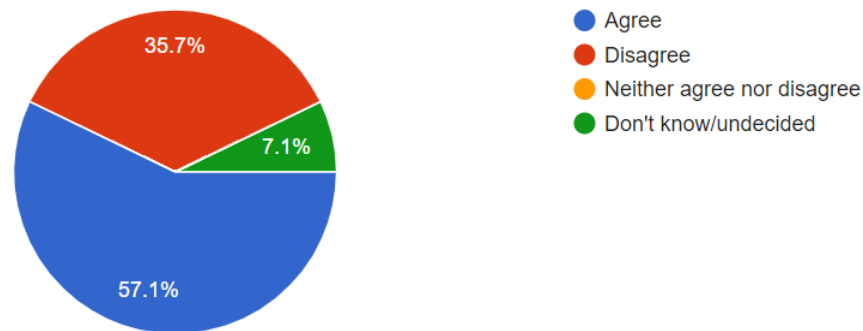
8. In your opinion, who should have (the responsibility/role) to facilitate creative experiences for students in schools?



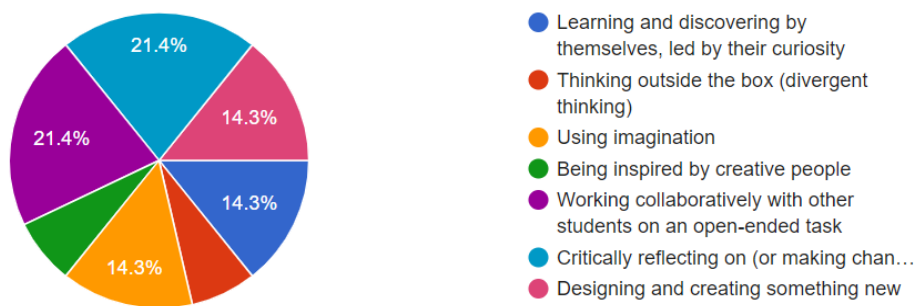
4.2 Dimensions of creativity in education

This set of questions is formulated to explore the dimensions of creativity in education. They are introduced with a set of statements and had to choose if they agree or not with the given statement or choose between the most relevant option to them.

9. Creativity can be enhanced by using technology



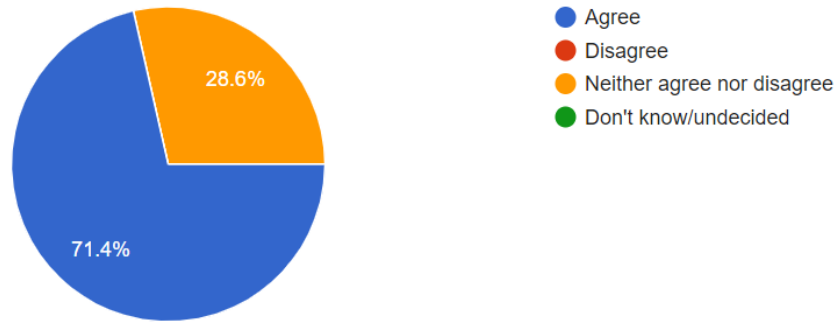
10. How often do pupils have the opportunity to take part in creative activities in the classroom?



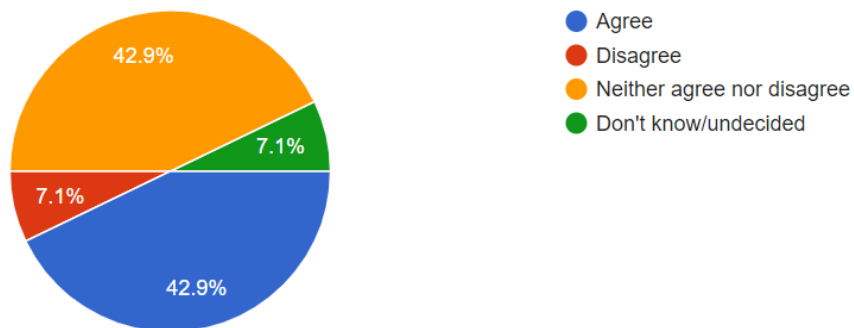
4.3 Barriers to creative teaching

This set of questions is formulated to Investigate the barriers that exist to creative teaching. They are introduced with a set of statements and had to choose if they agree or not with the given statement or choose between the different options that are relevant to them.

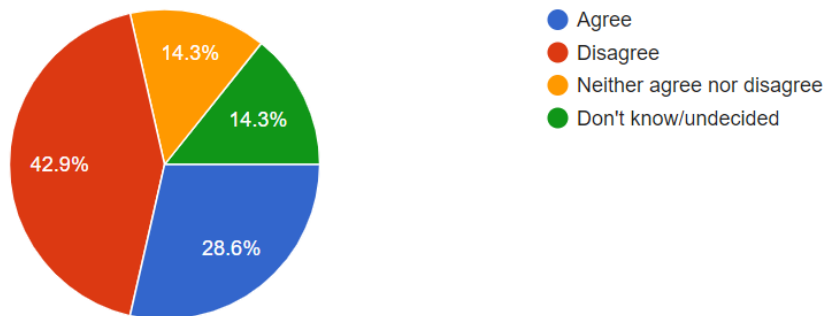
11. My school environment encourages creative behavior in students



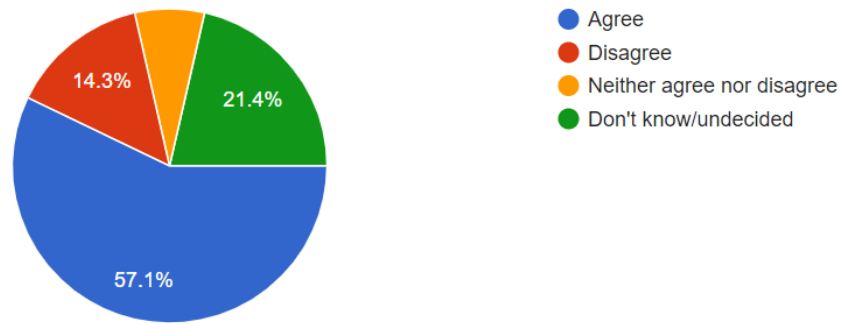
12. My school environment encourages creative behavior in teachers.



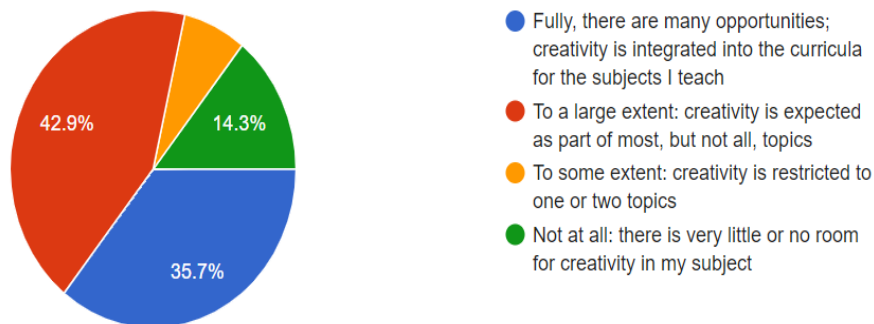
13. Students are not motivated to learn what is not being assessed



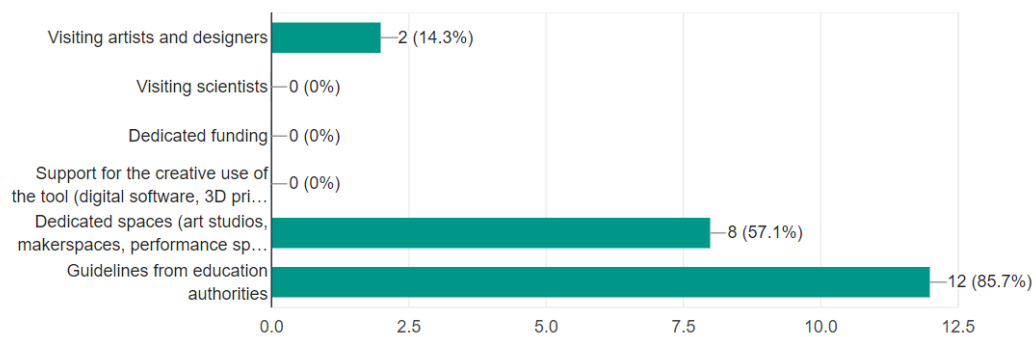
14. Encouraging creativity is difficult because of the way marks are allocated in assessment



15. To what extent can you include creativity in teaching?



16. Which of the following types of support does your school provide for teachers to foster creativity and pupils to engage in creative processes? (choose all that apply)



Conclusion

Results show that the majority of the participants do think that creativity is a gift and that can be nurtured in certain settings. It's good to see that 64.3% of the participants disagree with this as it means they are more willing to use methods to teach creativity in the classroom. Deciding if acquiring basic skills is more important than fostering creativity led to having 57.1% of participants disagreeing with the statement. Developing students' creativity is key responsibility of Arts teacher. Creativity refers only to music performance or creating artworks. Regarding the respondents' opinion on who should have (the responsibility/role) to facilitate creative experiences for students in schools, they thought that both teachers and other staff members at school are responsible about this. Most of the teachers believed that creativity can be enhanced by using technology.

Referring to the barriers that teachers encounter when they want to foster and develop creativity among students, they were not sure whether the school environment encourages creative behavior in teachers or not. The majority of the teachers agreed that encouraging creativity is difficult due to the way assessment is conducted at school. Most of the teachers think that they can include creativity to a large extent in teaching. The kind of resources that the schools use to foster creativity among students is by providing visits of different artists at school, by providing dedicated spaces in the school environment and by following the guidelines of the education authority.

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