Guest Editor's Introduction

Special Issue:

Creativity and Critical Thinking in Practice

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Among various learning domains such as knowledge comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956), creativity tops the list in terms of active learning (Anderson, et al., 2000). It is a high order thinking skill that includes the abilities to build on the lower learning domains, generate innovative ideas, integrate parts to make a new whole, as well as plan and design a new product. Meanwhile, critical thinking is the foundation of all kinds of learning, arts and science alike. It involves the process of thinking clearly and analyzing rationally what one should believe. In the digital age where technologies and new media bring a vibrant, diverse digital platform for knowledge sharing and communication, creativity, critical thinking, and the combination of creativity and critical thinking becomes increasingly important for maneuvering the multimodal communicative landscape amid today's information overload and fake news. In order to push forward creativity and critical thinking in school and beyond, Dr Winnie Ho and I started this special issue Creativity and Critical Thinking in Practice in September 2020, aiming to call for contributions from practitioners, educators, and international researchers around the world. We are fortunate to have received a sizeable amount of article submissions from Asia, Australasia, and the Middle East within six months. With the help of four peer reviewers, we have selected nine papers which can be categorized under three topics: (i) critical thinking in practice; (ii) application of creativity, and (iii) teaching creativity.

For (i) critical thinking in practice, three papers from Hong Kong, Japan, and Australia have been selected: Tso's paper conducts a logical-linguistic analysis of EFL university students' English writing. Numerous types of obscurity, ambiguity and meaning incompleteness are observed in Hong Kong students' writing, which indicates the need to teach critical thinking and logical linguistics in EFL writing classes as well as subject courses; Blake's paper discusses how a critical reading course that teaches logic and draws on the rhetorical appeals of ethos, logos and pathos successfully enhances the critical thinking and writing skills of undergraduate students in Japan; Sit's paper reveals the effectiveness of using digital-mediated learning to teach media analysis, develop multimodal literacies, and foster critical thinking of postgraduate students in Australia.

For (ii) application of creativity, we have also collected three articles that examine innovative pedagogy of teachers and creative engagement of students in the primary, post-secondary, and tertiary education sectors in Hong Kong. Ng and Ho's paper investigates how Hong Kong primary English, Mathematics and Music teachers have adopted diversified digital learning tools to build a creative online face-to-face environment for their P.1 - P.3 students; Lam and Chung's paper studies the effectiveness of teaching creatively at university and how the teacher-centred approach can be transformed into the student-centered approach in higher education in Hong Kong; Chung and Lam's paper explores how university students in Hong Kong perform their socio-cultural identities through creative use of social media.

For (iii) teaching creativity, yet another three articles on creativity and application have been collected. Lo's paper provides a literature review of the philosophical, psychological, and educational theories that explain creativity and pedagogy; based on primary students' perception of creative and effective teaching, Yam's paper suggests six domains of effective teaching, all of which are essential for teaching creativity and teaching creatively. Yam also reflects on his 25 years of teaching and research experiences, sharing his advice on how creativity can be taught; last but not least, Law's paper shares his journey with creativity and talks about his seven lessons on how to practise creativity in the classroom and beyond.

With the rise of online schooling in the pandemic, and with the rapid advancement of technology influencing our lives, we hope this special issue can give teachers and practitioners some useful ideas of how creativity and critical thinking can be put into practice in education.

References

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