

01 On Creative Thinking Education

In this information epoch of ours, when technology development is advancing by leaps and bounds, all sorts of knowledge are in their continuous improvement. Besides preserving the merit of traditional education, the trend of the contemporary education is seeking new ways of operating from the old theories. Therefore, the education of elevating the creative thinking capability has already become the tendency of the present day impartation. The up-date education has to shake off the influence of power and prestige, encouraging the teachers to teach with an open attitude, allowing a sphere for creative thinking, helping the students to nourish the ability of speculation and motivating the creativity of theirs so as to help them to adapt to the need of the developing society.

Our school had started the pilot project of creative thinking education in April 2002 and gained satisfactory results as well as abundant experience. Thus, for the academic year 2002/2003 creative thinking education was fully implemented in the whole school to nourish the children the capability of observation, exploration, problem solving, as well as to train them to be keen, fluent, flexible, unique and progressive in thinking. This allows the students to manifest their skill of speculation, their courage of expressing themselves and their gift of creativeness.

Here we would like to share with everybody the procedure of the execution of our creative thinking education:

All the designed activities must be multi-dimensional and student-oriented, basing on the ability, the interest, the physical and psychological needs of the children, noting also their individual difference.

In the classroom, the students will take the lead, whereas, the teacher will observe, guide and assist, altering the one-sided pattern of education of before, while creating more chances for interaction between the teacher and the students.

The flow of teaching activities includes news discussion, brainstorming, music and conceptual guidance, games and structural activities. Furthermore, there are programmes of art education, visiting trips, outdoor researches, etc.

Through the activities of news discussion, the students are offered the chance of caring for the events, as well as the society around them. They are instigated to contemplate and practise profound reflection, being happy to express their opinions and feelings. In the brainstorm of question raising, discussing, interacting, summarising, self-evaluating, etc., the speculative power of the students is then excited. For the activities of art education, the students' ability of beauty appreciation and estheticism is nurtured through music appreciation, dancing, articles of art, etc. These help the children to manifest their imagination, to ease off their excitement and to coordinate their body movements. With a designed story, the students are encouraged to organize individual, group and mass activities. This does help to nourish the children's creativity and the attitude of cooperation. As for case activities, it is made after the students' discussion of deciding the contents of the activities, organizing their own team pattern, the information collection and materials to be used so as to create their own acting process. In the procedure of construction, the students are stimulated to take active creations, to search and cooperate, to be trained to make individual critical thinking and to acquire the capability of problem solving. Through educational trips and outdoor activities, the students are equipped with the capacity of observing, creating and cooperating.

With the model of student-oriented teaching, a teacher will welcome all the different thoughts and suggestions of the children, helping them to be courageous

to manifest their own opinions. It is most important that a harmonious learning atmosphere is generated in all the activities, allowing the students to enjoy learning.

In the past, the vocabulary that the students have to learn was arranged by the teachers and the contents were all about their programmes and courses only. Here, the students may put forward some words they would like to learn. Through the activities of information collection, they come to have a better knowledge of words and terms. In this way, their vocabulary is enriched and is practical for life. What is important is that the students are interested in learning as well as they are happy to learn.

At the beginning of the operation, due to the change of teaching pattern and method, the students' participation was not too positive. To induce the students to learn actively, the teachers did try very hard to motivate and instigate their adaptation to the new policy. After continuous encouragement, the children began to bring out questions themselves and the learning interest was greatly promoted. This strengthened their ability of problem solving. When the relationship between the teachers and the students was very closely inter-related, the latter did gain much confidence in themselves, manifesting fully their speculation and their potential of creativity.

After a series of inspiring activities, the students began to take the initiative to participate and to try, while enjoying the observation of the things around, as well as being happy to communicate and share their life experience with others. They were willing to keep the rules of the activities, knowing how to appreciate their own and others' performances. They were happy to share the fruit of cooperation and were serious in reflecting what they had acquired. Classroom activity reflection was an important step to elevate the ability of self-examination. This also helped to promote the nurture of moral behaviour. Therefore, daily reflection for students is a vital item of creative thinking education for young children. [Continuing on Page 6](#)



From the performance of the students, the teachers made observations, records, assessments, etc. and found that the capability for creative thinking was promoted. The students were then able to be independent, cooperating, keen in communicating and were active with the spirit of observation in their daily life.

The execution of creative thinking education was a new attempt. Due to the change of teaching pattern, the teachers, of course, were undertaking certain weight of pressure and there had been frustration in the beginning. After participating some training courses and seminars, as well as reading the relevant reference books, with the support and help from the school authorities, while discussing and consulting with each other, the teachers re-established their confidence enabling the designing of activities and pedagogic procedures to run smoothly on.

Reviewing this endeavour in those days, it was inevitable that there were difficulties. Fortunately, we were helped by the experienced teachers. Upon mutual discussion and interaction, a team spirit was established with the full support and encouragement from the school authorities, e.g. supply of reference books and the needed materials, the arrangement of human resources and the necessary compound for activities, etc. we felt that we possessed a strong force of unity.



Creative thinking education not only nourishes the students' potential of observation and alertness but also urges the teachers to bear concern for the performance of each child. Due to the interaction between each other is set up, even the teachers' sense of observation is also elevated.

The execution of creative education adds the opportunity of interaction between the teachers and the students, the children are positive in participation, eager for discussion, instigating deep interest for learning. Having students of active research, information seeking and being industrious in learning, the teachers are facing great challenges and are encouraged to keep improving, absorbing more and more new information to raise their initiative. When the teachers are able to arrange the effective pedagogic operation, their teaching technique is raised, thus helping the teachers to develop their professional skills.

Summarizing the whole policy, we may say that when executing creative thinking education a teacher should (1) Delete the concept of "a teacher is almighty" and "I am unique", forsaking the power of commanding but embracing the different opinions of the students. (2) Allow the students the freedom to search while the teacher is only playing the guide but not controller. (3) Respect the students' opinions and establish a harmonious relation with the students. Only in a free and comfortable atmosphere that the children can manifest the potential of creative thinking. (4) Establish a space for multidisciplinary learning while reducing airs of criticism. Embrace the different opinions of the students and do not throw out comments too soon but guide the students to observe, to analyse and to deduce conclusions from their own reasoning. (5) Utilize instigating questions to inspire the creative thoughts of the students making use of open questions to nurture the imaginative power of the students. (6) Make use of various ways of assessing and grading the performance of the students.

The above experience is what we gain from the execution of creative thinking education. With this sharing we hope to obtain the effect of throwing a brick and to get a piece of jade in return. As for the practical operation of creative thinking education, it counts mostly on the teachers' concept, motivation and perseverance in the policy. In the teaching procedure, the teacher is the key person in the education reform. He/she needs to keep reflecting, delving and striving to be a teacher possessing creativity. Only through continuous absorbing, seaching, mutual encouraging among the colleagues, while advancing together in full team cooperation that this policy can be effective.

The future accomplishment of creativeness of our children depends on the united efforts of the educators!

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