
HISTORICAL ROOTS OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT: This article explores the historical roots and evolution of developing students' creative thinking skills. Creative thinking is a critical competency in the modern educational landscape, essential for fostering innovation and problem-solving abilities. Understanding its historical foundations offers valuable insights into how educational practices and philosophies have shaped contemporary approaches. This review traces the origins of creative thinking in education, examining key periods and figures that have influenced its development, from ancient civilizations to modern pedagogical theories.

KEYWORDS: Creative Thinking, Education, Historical Development, Pedagogy, Philosophical Influences, Experiential Learning, Cognitive Science, Educational Reforms, STEM, STEAM, Project-Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, Design Thinking.

INTRODUCTION

Creative thinking, defined as the ability to generate novel and useful ideas, is increasingly recognized as a vital skill for students. Its importance is underscored by the demands of the 21st-century economy, which values innovation and adaptability. However, the roots of creative thinking in education stretch back centuries, reflecting a rich tapestry of philosophical, cultural, and pedagogical influences. This article aims to trace these historical roots, highlighting how past educational practices have contributed to the current emphasis on fostering creativity in students.

The concept of creativity can be traced to ancient civilizations, where it was often linked with divine inspiration. In ancient Greece, philosophers like Plato and Aristotle explored the nature of creativity. Plato viewed creativity as a form of divine madness, while Aristotle saw it as a rational process that could be cultivated. The trivium and quadrivium of classical education emphasized rhetoric and logic, skills closely related to creative thinking.

During the medieval period, education was heavily influenced by religious institutions, which emphasized rote learning and memorization. However, the Renaissance marked a significant shift, with a renewed interest in classical learning and humanism. Figures such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo exemplified the intersection of art and science, demonstrating that creativity could be cultivated through diverse disciplines. The era's emphasis on individual potential and inquiry laid the groundwork for more modern approaches to creative education.

The Enlightenment brought a focus on reason and scientific inquiry, with educators like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau advocating for experiential learning and critical thinking. Rousseau's idea that education should nurture a child's natural curiosity was particularly

influential. The Romantic period further emphasized the importance of imagination and emotional expression in education, with poets and philosophers like William Wordsworth and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe championing the role of creativity in personal and intellectual development.

The 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of new educational philosophies that placed a greater emphasis on creativity. The progressive education movement, led by figures such as John Dewey and Maria Montessori, argued for an experiential and child-centered approach to learning. Dewey, in particular, believed that education should prepare individuals to think critically and solve problems creatively. Montessori's methods encouraged hands-on learning and the development of self-directed learning habits.

The mid to late 20th century witnessed significant advances in cognitive science, which provided a deeper understanding of the processes underlying creative thinking. Researchers like J.P. Guilford and E. Paul Torrance developed models and tests to measure creativity, shifting the focus from purely theoretical discussions to empirical studies. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) became a widely used tool to assess students' creative potential.

Today, the development of creative thinking skills is a central goal of educational systems worldwide. Reforms such as the introduction of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and STEAM (STEM + Arts) education emphasize the integration of creative thinking into traditional academic subjects. Project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and design thinking are some of the contemporary methodologies that encourage creativity in students. Educational technology also plays a crucial role, providing new tools and platforms for creative expression and collaboration.

CONCLUSION

The historical development of creative thinking in education reflects a complex interplay of philosophical, cultural, and pedagogical influences. From the divine inspiration of ancient times to the empirical studies of the modern era, the evolution of creative thinking skills in students has been shaped by various educational paradigms. Understanding these historical roots enriches our appreciation of contemporary educational practices and highlights the enduring importance of fostering creativity in the classroom. As we continue to innovate and reform education, the lessons of the past will remain invaluable in guiding our efforts to cultivate the creative thinkers of the future.

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