

CREATIVE EDUCATION AS STRATEGY FOR BUILDING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

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Abstract

There has been perpetual and enduring tendency on the part of educational stakeholders in Nigeria towards teaching for the learners to pass their paper and pencil examinations and claim their certificates at the end of their programmes without recourse to the employability and functionality of such graduates in the contemporary world of work. This is obviously in spite of present-day reality of the use of creative education strategies to create in the learners entrepreneurial skills that will make them relevant, functional, productive and of course marketable in the global world of work. Instead of being able to reproduce what was taught, students learn to develop their ability to find various solutions to problems. This paper advocates the inclusion of creative education as a subject/course of study in our educational system as catalyst to capacity building in entrepreneurial skills as well as springboard for sustainable national development. The paper suggested among others the inclusion of divergent thinking and discovery learning in the curriculum of the nation's educational system at all levels.

Keywords: Creativity, Creative Education, Entrepreneurial skills, National development

Introduction

One of the major problems that has stolen the peace of Nigeria is the high level of unemployment and unemployability of the Nigerian graduates. This is a fact that is self-evident and not an over-statement. Unemployment and unemployability are seen in almost all the sectors of Nigeria of the Nigerian economy. This is because of the type of education bequeathed on the youth which emphasizes cognitive development which in turn has led to massive underemployment and massive production of unmarketable graduates that roam the street in endless search for no-existing jobs. This can be attributed to the miserable state of education in Nigeria which at best could be described as unhealthy and below global standards. A situation where Nigerian graduates cannot write good application letter for employment is to say the least appalling. This paper tries to redress this anomaly and make Nigerian education work through capacity building in entrepreneurial skills through the introduction of creative education in the curriculum at all levels.

Creative Education

Creativity according to Hockenbury and Hockenbury (2000) refers to a group of cognitive processes used to generate useful, original and novel ideas or solutions to problems. Creativity also refers as an artistic or intellectual or inventiveness that would result in some novel and valuable products (Benjamin, Hopkins and Nations, 1987). Creativity becomes relevant because challenges and difficulties exist in every effort made by man to achieve set objectives and these challenges and difficulties should be solved in order to move forward. Many a time, the use of trite formulas and methods becomes ineffective, slow, and the result is no longer ideal. Creativity thus connotes the use of both the brain and brawn, zeal and zest, intellect and power of the mind to renovate and restructure, reinvent and at times create something unique, novel and hitherto non-existent to solve human problems, make the process easier and less cumbersome to achieve faster and better results.

Creative education is the careful impartation of creative skills, insightfulness and divergent, as well as self-discovery process to the learner to assist him/her to become a problem-solver instead of developing phobia for novel situations and challenges. Electronic device defines creative education as when students

are able to use imagination and critical thinking to create new and meaningful forms of ideas, where they can take risks, be independent and flexible, instead of being taught to reiterate what was being taught. Students learn to develop their ability to find various solutions to their problems.

Entrepreneurial Skills

An Entrepreneurial Skill is the ability of an individual to exploit an idea and create an enterprise (small or big) not only for personal gain but also for social and developmental gains (Olagunju, 2004). The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills through creative education involves students/ learners being guided to explore through problem-based learning approach the entrepreneurial potentials and opportunities that exist in their programme of study.

Entrepreneurial skill development would further specifically require students to have hands-on experience on a variety of pertinent skills related to success in entrepreneurial endeavours. The practical experience may include the following: searching discovery and writing skills for small project grants from support systems to set up the new business; internship in the form of field experience, clinical experience and work experience (Umeifekwem, 2010).

Sustainable National Development

Sustainable National Development are words used to describe the ability of a country/ countries to improve the social welfare of the people by providing social amenities, potable water, good road network, water-ways, effective medical care and, above all enhancement of human capacity. It refers to positive and qualitative growth of services, life and infrastructure in a society, such that citizens see fulfillment and the good life in comparable measure to what others enjoy elsewhere to ensure contentment in their national boundary (Enemuio and Eze, 2014). Sustainable National Development therefore connotes an enduring human development through the massive development of educational facilities which is a major springboard to launch the average citizen into an Eldorado of good living that is in no way below the United Nations sub-marginal development of quality life throughout the world. Sustainable National Development can be said to have been achieved in a country like Nigeria when the following conditions are seen to be in existence. They include but not limited to:

- a. Increase in the purchasing power of the ordinary Nigerian.
- b. Bringing and making employment available to citizens who desire to work.
- c. Provision of security of lives of property of Nigerians.
- d. Trust, confidence and justice are practiced in Nigeria as a way of life.
- e. Even development among the six geo- political zones that make up the country Nigeria.
- f. Elimination of all the conditions that elicit hate- speech.
- g. Absolute cleanliness both in private and public institutions.
- h. Where love of the country will supersede love of self and ethnic group.
- i. Selection process to national assignments will be on merit and not on religious or ethnic nationality.
- j. Where corruption is eradicated and totally eliminated.
- k. Where quality education can be accessed irrespective of parental social background etc.

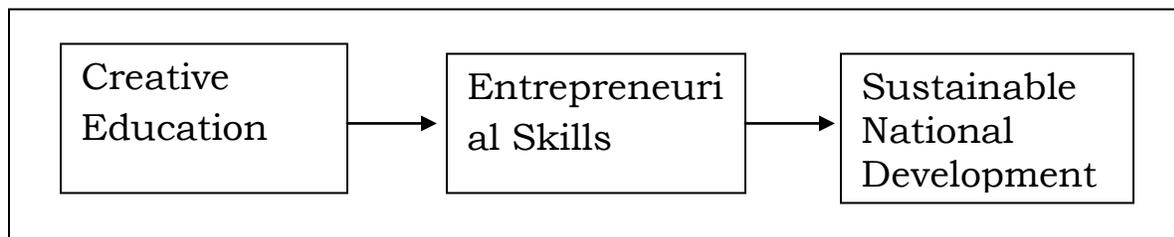


Figure 1: Relationship between Creative Education, Entrepreneurial skills and Sustainable National Development.

Tenets of Creative Education and Entrepreneurial Skills for Sustainable National Development

Creative Education does not just happen as a matter of chance. It is mostly the product of systematic efforts by effective teachers who only know how to select instructional strategies and create a learning environment that facilitates creative thinking, and in addition makes use of discovery learning, insightful learning and divergent thinking. The very nature of the creative education process and its interactive variables make the arrangement and management of an environment for learning, a critical prerequisite for success. High achievers in the teaching profession have been observed to create more learning time, provide more opportunities for student engagement in learning activities and enhance students' engagement in learning activities and enhance students' self-regulatory abilities (Mansfield, Daytner and Daytner, 2001).

Arranging and managing creative education learning environment requires planning and designing of relevant activities concerning the creative process. This includes teaching the tenets of creative education such as reflection, preparation, incubation, inspiration (illumination), trial act, and verification. The following explanation needs to be made concerning the points raised above to situate them clearly.

1. **Reflection:** In the bid to inculcate creative education, the student must be taught the need for reflection, which is the first step in trying to solve a problem. The creative person must be taught to think seriously about the task. In doing this, he/ she tries to make the intellect focus on the problem and tries to remember past but similar challenges. The brain is compelled to take a holistic look at the prevailing situation and compare same with previous but similarly events.
2. **Preparation:** The creative education process includes coming up with several exciting and denotative solutions. This also keeps the creative mind restless, anxious, alert and unsettled. At this point the brain is stressed-up- and prepares itself on how best to solve the problem. The individual will now begin brain-storming, critical questioning, consultation, synthesis and analysis in the effort to find the best solution by the fastest and less cumbersome means. According to Nnachi (2007), the preparation period is the period during which knowledge is being acquired and tentative thought in a specified direction being tried out.
3. **Incubation:** At this stage the creative mind is relaxed through social activities like watching films, watching football, going to visit friends and relations etc. The desperate nature declines and the creative idea pass through reformation in the subconscious. This is a period of sublimation.
4. **Inspiration (illumination):** At this stage the brain is filled with ideas that have been reformed from the discoveries. The creative person's mind is now very anxious to get going into practicing what comes up in the brain with joy. The ideas now being reformed inspire the individual. The stage is also referred to as illumination since the inspiration illuminates the mind with ideas full of reforms (Nnachi, 2003, 2007).
5. **Trial Act:** Guided by the inspired reformed idea, the creative person goes into practice. The creative person sets in the motion the idea to know how it works and makes necessary adjustments until solution is found and the situation comes under control.
6. **Verification:** This is the period of verifying the workability of the entire idea; that is, putting the idea to test. The new "product" is critically examined to confirm its workability. When this is established, it has become a new creative act with some imperfections. The process of modification will be put in place until the correct version is concluded and confirmed to be good.

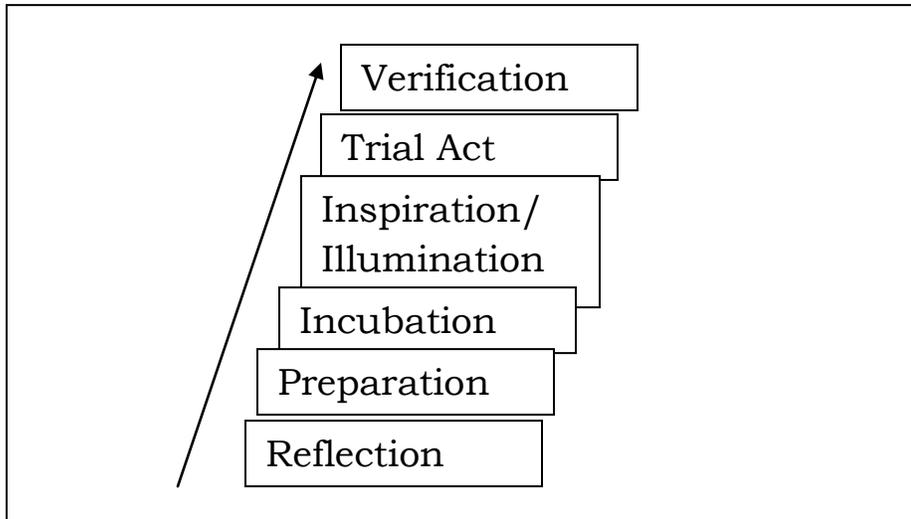


Figure 2: Levels of creative process

Competencies for Effective Creative Education Environment

For creative Education to be meaningful and effective in the lives of the learners, teachers and stakeholders must put in a positive environment where students and learners engage in learning activities on a daily basis that will address the special needs of equipping their entrepreneurial skills. Thus, to create an effective environment that is conducive for learning creative education, teachers and stakeholders must possess the following competencies:

- Arranging the physical space for learning that minimizes distractions and promotes teacher-learners satisfactory interaction.
- Ensuring a positive classroom climate where students' self-esteem is enhanced and intrinsic desire to learn is aroused.
- Setting acceptable limits of behaviour in the learning environment.
- Selecting and designing activities that encourage ego-involvement in task execution.
- Monitoring students' activities.
- Modifying instructional strategies based on needs (Ormrod, 2006).

It is important to note that including creative education in the curriculum of subjects/ courses obtainable in our schools must be matched with the corresponding development of positive classroom climate conducive for the learning of such skills and competencies that will enhance and ensure the development of creativity in the learners. Ormrod (2006) has identified some generic strategies relevant for creating and maintaining the much-needed classroom atmosphere that promotes creative education.

Creativity is the development of innovative ways of doing things. Innovative and creative persons think in special ways and they reason and design things in captivating manners. They tend to change already existing idea and evolve their own idea towards the development of the world. They thus formulate ideas, design things and carry out activities in manners quite new, strange and unfamiliar to others (Nnachi, 2003). These competencies can be acquired via creative education. It involves the needed inclusion of creative education as a course of study and/ or subject of study in the school curriculum across all levels of the nation's education. The inclusion of a training programme in creative education can assist the beneficiaries x-ray challenges critically from different perspective. Moreover the need for inclusion of creative education in Nigeria educational system can be justified based on the realities on the ground, such as globalization, information and communication technology (ICT), faster cycle of production and acute unemployment.

The nexus between creative education and the development of entrepreneurial skills is very strong. Creative education will ensure that the nation's teeming youths are involved in searching out and commencement of new projects, make an entirely new discovery, create new opportunities while solving problems. Knowledge of creative education will also ensure that those who pass through such training learn the practical solutions to freshly identified initiatives creative educations guarantees the use of improvisation to use local materials to produce something new or modify existing concepts, products, and services that will be beneficial to mankind. These and other innovations are what creative education can kick-start in the realm of entrepreneurial skills. This means that the entrepreneur with vision can get people with creative, insightful and divergent minds to work together in order to create, implement, generate, optimize and conceptualize team- work where people of like minds will work for better results. This is better and more productive than mixing all kinds of experts who lack creativity to work on a project. This is why most establishments in Nigeria collapse because of obvious mis-match.

Onu (2006) avers that in creative and competitive world of entrepreneurship, the drive is to deliver creative and innovative wares. These innovations, that add value to human welfare result in better resource utilization. The creative process which is very complicated process, involves the ability to generalize, evaluate, design, troubleshoot, make decisions, create, modify, simplify, synthesize, hypothesize, learn new skills and memorize while utilizing various forms of higher order cognitive process. The individual's ability to solve problems creatively therefore is dependent on the individual ability to utilize knowledge required to solve specific problems.

Linking creative education with entrepreneurial skills and national development will enhance development that is sustainable for a long period of time. Creative education makes the entrepreneur a critical thinker, an inventor with a seeker, and an investor with an intuitive mindset. This is because the entrepreneurial mindset sees needs, challenges and opportunities, as well as a risk-bearer when it comes to doing business. Being a strategist, the entrepreneur with creative education is more confident and hardworking and one who does not shrink from risk-taking and responsibility that is worthwhile. This is because he is never afraid of failure and/ or committing errors in his line of business.

A careful reader will observe that sustainable national development in infrastructure, human capital development as well as decent standard of living for all citizen are possible if the teaming graduates come out with self- reliant skills in entrepreneurship They will not only be relevant but also markable and employable. This will motivate parents to send their children to school; they will come out to contribute their quota to national development.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the current state of unemployment, and unemployable youths with their attendants restiveness is not only worrisome but unacceptable to say the least. The volatile condition is yearning for renewed vigour and contemporary approach. Creative education is the fresh label, the over haul. It is obvious that only the intervention of governments at all levels of education will effectively introduce changes in the mix. Hence, it is the responsibility of government to make critical policy that will include creative education in the school curriculum so as to bring fresh and flexible ideas that will bring about new ideas, skills, insight, productivity as part and parcel of our education. This will make the nation graduate employable, marketable, functional, confident and self- reliant graduates. Thus, if properly funded and well established will build entrepreneurial skills which will go a long way in building sustainable national development.

Suggestions

1. The Federal, state and local governments should make educational policies that will include creative education into the nation's education system at all level of our education.

2. Fund will be made available to give teachers the necessary competencies to teach creative education that will lead to the development of entrepreneurial skills via seminars, conferences and workshops
3. Infrastructure such as good road network, railways, and waterways should be well developed to enhance the rate and ease of conveying goods and services from one point to the other in the country.
4. Teachers, educational psychologists and guidance counsellors should utilize every opportunity they interact with the students to include divergent thinking, insightful learning and confidence of the learners.

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