
The Creativity develops through language for the Preschool Child in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Producing a creative citizen is one of the primary responsibilities of education. This creativity, which is the core concept of the 21st century, is a responsibility that is instilled in the child from an early age. Creating a creative mindset is essential for the development of a country. Although there are many ways to develop new thoughts in a child, the most appropriate approach is language development. This study tried to introduce how preschool teachers practice developing creativity in their classrooms as well as what are the best practices to be presented in developing creativity for young children. The survey method was used to collect data and tried to analyze data quantitatively and qualitatively. The sample was selected from eighty-five preschool teachers in the Colombo district. For the in-depth analysis, twenty preschool schools were selected, and finally, ten preschools were selected to identify instruments to be used to develop creativity in preschool children. In this research, three activations were performed, and data were collected under selected samples in three phases. The finding showed that many teachers did not have a clear understanding of the concept of creativity, but all accepted the creativity is important to develop in young children. Language activities helped to develop creativity and training should be strengthened in preschool teachers continuously.

Keywords:

Creativity.
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1. Introduction

Creativity is essential to create a new way for the world to go on. Creative persons formulate new things that make the world motivating and diverse. It allows self-reformation through critical thinking and developing stronger social skills. In the real world, often cooperation with people, so creativity is stimulating individuals or groups and gives better results. Nothing is an original idea anymore; creativity is found in how to interpret an idea and put our adjustment to it.

Early interventions in promoting creativity in preschool children through language development are extremely important for preschool teachers. For many children, the early childhood setting might be their first contact with the preschool teachers. The importance of acquiring language learning for the development of creativity and how it should be understood by the school community will be discussed in this study. It will be elaborated under problem identification, objectives of the study and related factors, and the importance of the development of creativity of preschool children through language. Thus, the use of language makes it easier for him or her to develop creative thinking at the beginning of life.

Why creativity is important to the modern classroom.

- Creative thinking inspires children to explore, enquire and discover, which are all vital for innovation.
- Children are more involved and interested, creative learning gives them a deeper understanding of what is being taught and they motivate more of their learning.
- Creative thinking encourages children to feel safe in taking risks in their explorations.
- Creative thinking encourages to think creatively and develops experiments, questioning, problem-solving skills, etc.....

There are many definitions of creativity. Definitions of creativity are not straightforward, and many writers have contributed to the debate about what constitutes creativity, arguing from different standpoints. However, most theorists (for example, Torrance, Sharp, Houston, Ann Bamford, and Catherine Burke) agree that the creative process involves several components, most commonly:

- Imagination
- Originality (the ability to come up with ideas that are new and unusual)
- Productivity (the ability to create a variety of different ideas through divergent thinking)
- Problem-solving (application of knowledge, attitude, and skills, and imagination to a given situation)
- The ability to produce an outcome of value and worth.

The above components of creativity have been considered in the processes of developing key terms, aims, activities, and teaching methods implemented in this study.

Torrance (1961) indicated that the natural way for children to learn is to be able to employ their creative skills through drawing, dancing, painting, language, and music. These opportunities help children develop critical-thinking skills and become fully functioning individuals. Torrance stated that assessing children's creative skills is a necessary step in identifying the specific abilities that children acquire that are essential elements in their development.

Many early childhood educators believe that developing a partnership, with parents and other members of the family, regarding the child's language development can strengthen the child's ability to learn and explore creative language. It will help to develop the creativity of the child. Creativity has been considered in terms of the process, product, or person. (Barron and Harrington, 1981). They define creativity as the interpersonal and intrapersonal process using which original, high quality, and genuinely significant products are developed. In dealing with young children, especially of preschool education age, the focus should be on the process. Sharp (2004) describes how creativity is associated with real-life experiences.

According to international studies, general principles of preschool education should aim to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children can feel happy and secure and encourage their emotional, social, physical, creative, and intellectual development. Preschool education extends children's abilities to communicate ideas and feelings in a variety of ways. According to the latest research findings, this is the time of rapid growth in all aspects of a child's development including language.

The Sri Lankan National Education Commission Report (NEC, 2003) lists seven competencies that should be developed in the child during his/her exposure to formal and informal education. Of those seven competencies, this study focuses on three competencies. These are the competencies related to personality development, communication, and the environment. The report has emphasized competencies relating to personality development as generic skills such as creativity, divergent thinking, initiative, decision-making, problem-solving, critical and analytical thinking, teamwork, interpersonal relations, discovering, and exploring. Values such as integrity, tolerance, and respect for human dignity, and emotional intelligence are also important here. The above competencies are important also because they are directly related to the development of language and creativity in everyday life. These competencies focus on providing a large array of experiences for children to develop creativity.

A literature review that has been done shows language development in preschool education is much discussed in the field of education. Much of the endeavor of preschool education focuses on the language development of the child. Adults should help children to become aware of their own goals, make plans, and review their progress and successes. Also, the facilitator should be able to describe what he/she sees them trying to do and encourage the children to talk about their processes and successes. Praise should be specific when given, especially noting efforts such as how the child concentrates, tries different approaches, persists, solves problems, and has new ideas. Children should be encouraged to learn together and from each other. Children develop their motivations when given reasons and talk about learning, rather than being just directed.

As children grow, their thoughts and the development process become similar to that of adults. Once the child has formed certain pre-conceptions, they can hinder his/her capability of retaining two ideas in their mind or comparing these two ideas. This inability to compare can restrict a child's capacity to compare two things mentally. This becomes evident in the difficulty the child encounters in serializing information.

The development of speech abilities of preschool children is heavily influenced by their background and learning environment. It is, therefore, important that a child has sufficient opportunities to develop his/her language skills and that the preschool environment supports this learning. The opportunity should be provided especially for the child to talk with friends and to have a cordial relationship with the teacher. The teacher should know how to get close to the child. Talking is a favorite activity of the four-year-old. They talk while they are playing, frequently describing what they are doing while playing (Howard, Shaughnessy, Sanger, & Hux, 1998). However, taking turns in conversation is difficult. They want to talk and be heard but have difficulty listening to others talking. At this age, some children talk incessantly, and teachers need to help these children to learn to regulate their talking to provide opportunities for others to speak.

In the present society, a wide range of media and platforms are used in communication. However, it is critically important that humans should pay attention to the development of basic language skills of young children that can be further developed. It is the language that helps the child to identify and interact with the world and to perform actively. In addition, it is the language that helps the children to acclimatize to their environment, to identify the environment, and involve themselves in day-to-day activities for communication. Sometimes children try to communicate more than through their vocabulary and create new meanings (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The richer the environment, the more extensive a child's language will become. Similarly, a child who has a limited environment will have a limited vocabulary.

There is much evidence that language is used freely when the child associates with relatives and friends, e.g., when playing at festivals, and at religious worship especially concerning the tone used. The child should be provided many opportunities to develop his/her abilities across the range of speech. In this regard, the child's questions regarding the environment must be encouraged for him/her to explore the environment. When the child raises a question, running the child down or ignoring the child, or adopting a negative attitude can impact the child's self-confidence. Command of the language of the child can be broadened by providing the child with the opportunity of developing his/her speech ability, gaining the skills to identify the environment which will give freedom for the child to be involved in various multiple activities. The child's speech abilities are developed to the extent that he/she is allowed to talk, relate short stories, describe what happens in the environment daily, etc.....

Muhammed (2015) has pointed out the use of language learning for effectiveness. According to his research, he showed that there are many ways to think and find out new ideas. To achieve this, teachers need to encourage open-ended thinking by not settling on the first ideas, and always respect children's efforts and ideas, so that they feel safe to take a risk with a new idea. A teacher should encourage the children to talk aloud as this helps them to think and control what they do – exhibiting self-talk, describing whatever actions in play are key strategies. Similarly giving children time to talk and think and value their questions, talking and eliciting as many as possible responses, without rushing towards answers too quickly. Supporting children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches, and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences are critical.

Displaying the creative process by showing an interest in some of the many possible ways forward, provides sustained shared thinking that helps children to explore ideas and make cognitive and creative links. Following a child's lead in conversation and thinking about things together will encourage them to describe problems they encounter and to create ways to solve the problems. These strategies will show and model how to do things – including problem-solving, thinking, and learning. Providing feedback through this process will help children to review their thinking, learning and to be rewarded for their progress. Talking with children about what they are doing, how they plan to do it, what worked well, and what they would change next time, reinforces, and encourages creativity and exploratory learning. An effective teacher should model the plan-do-review process as a familiar strategy in a child's community.

The language helps the children to acclimatize to his/her environment, to identify the environment, and involve themselves in the day-to-day activities for communication. Children use language to communicate their thoughts, needs, and demands. The development of language directly affects the development of the individual in many areas. Development of creativity through language is initiated from the stage the child displays independence. Language contributes to the development of the personality of a child and hence helps shape a child's character. Therefore, language is significant to develop creativity in young children.

It is important to develop creativity in preschool children through language at this level. Morris (2006) describes that when students are creative in the classroom, they are likely to question and challenge and do not necessarily follow the rules. They make connections and see relationships. Creative children think laterally and make relations between things that are not usually connected. Creative children play with ideas, try alternatives and fresh approaches, and keep an open mind and modify their ideas to achieve creative results and reflect critically on ideas, actions, and outcomes.

Education has a key role to play in children's development by providing positive creative and inspiring experiences at every stage of the educational journey. When early childhood professionals encourage parents to nurture their children, it increases the likelihood that the child will experience success and grow up to be a

healthy individual. Supporting families in child-rearing, which includes creativity, begins by forming partnerships between the family and community that are based upon mutual respect, shared understanding, and cooperative decision making.

In the context of the average Sri Lankan preschools, Munasinghe (2002) has noted that teachers and families, in many instances, do not use language or activities aimed at helping /assisting the child to develop creativity through language. Warnasuriya (2012) has also commented on the quality of preschool programs in which activities on a given day include religious observances, outdoor play, aesthetic and manipulative skills, speech, and vocabulary but without giving priority to developing listening skills through storytelling and environment-related activities. He further explains that the failure to implement the national policy on early childhood care and development has led to an unregulated and indiscriminate expansion of preschools in Sri Lanka. The present study focuses on the development of the language of the child which is the most elementary manifestation of creativity and the role played by the teachers and parents in the promotion of the development of creativity in the early years.

Play is the leading actor in early childhood, and it is the process in which learning occurs. In the play, children utilize more complex language than in conversations with adults. Also, play is enacted by the players (children), not the adults (teachers or parents). This is a significant factor as play is what children would choose and manage for themselves. Broadhead and Burt (2012) and Broadhead (2014) pointed out that children learn through the process of playing, they need plenty of time, open-ended materials, and co-players. Adults cannot plan children's play, but they can guide or facilitate children's plans and activities, by providing creative resources and a supportive environment and community.

Vygotsky stated that imaginative play is a crucial component of a child's normal development. What may seem to be a simple and uncomplicated way for children to entertain themselves is a complex process that affects all aspects of a child's cognitive and social development. Therefore, play shapes how children make sense of their world, how they develop thinking skills, and how they acquire language. How imaginative play bolsters the development of the child's brain merits investigation, especially the dialogues they have with themselves when they engage in imaginative play. Role-play means creating a story and giving voice to the different characters in the story or incident. When children imitate others, they are developing an expressive vocabulary that allows them to name and navigate the world and relationships around them. Less verbal children may talk more during imaginative play than in other settings. Children at play are making sense of the world through a process of "inner speech" - that is, they are regularly talking out aloud to themselves. As adults, we lose this capacity because it is not socially allowed. If we listen to children at play, we can hear the way they converse with themselves and with small groups to make sense of the external world. Vygotsky's explorations on the impact of play in the development of a child's language provide evidence for the importance of creative play in the development of a child's language and social understanding.

Moll explained further that the "Zone of Proximal Development"(ZPD) is a concept that explains how thinking initially carried out among people in a group becomes recognized, with individuals gradually taking control and direction of their thinking and relationships in a world within which they always remain interdependent. Vygotsky's theory of development leads researchers to observe system change: changes in thinking among people as a function of shared group life, not just dyadic interactions that might facilitate change in an individual's thinking." (1990, p. 288)

Vygotsky stated that "Thought is separated from a thing because a child who begins to play with a doll, and a stick becomes a horse; action according to rules begins to be defined from thought rather than things themselves..... The child does not do this suddenly. To tear thought from the thing is a difficult task for the child. Play is a transitional form. At the movement, the stick (i.e., the thing) becomes a pivot for tearing the meaning from the real horse. One of the basic psychological structures that define the child's relationship to reality is change." (1978, p.69-71)

Imagination was the key focus of Vygotsky's theory of creativity. His theory introduced the concept of imagination as the internalization of children's play, stating that imagination is a higher mental function and as such it is a consciously directed thought process. In addition, creative thinking involves the collaboration of imagination and thinking in the concept. Both artistic and scientific creativity requires the collaboration of imagination and thinking (1978, p. 4).

According to Vygotsky's theory, the teacher has to give a helping hand when the child finds it difficult to proceed further or proceeds in the wrong direction. Vygotsky has pointed out the relationship between the process of child development and the possibilities of instruction. The implication here is that the child's thinking should be encouraged and that the teacher takes over when the child cannot proceed further. The role of the present-day teacher should be to identify the potential of the child and help build that potential.

Piaget's theory identifies the standards that can be used with children: (1) treat questions with respect, (2) treat imaginative ideas with respect, (3) value students' ideas, (4) encourage practice-learning without the threat of evaluation, and (5) join in evaluation with causes and consequences. The environment directly affects developing creativity in young children. Philosophers explained that a more creative environment

gives more opportunities to engage in various types of activities and through that for children to express their ideas.

Reggio Emilia's approach (2006) pioneered a particular learning approach to early childhood education, emphasizing creative learning. Preschool child is in a sensitive period for language development. They absorb languages naturally and are adept imitators of speech sounds. Because they are very self-centered, they do not like to work in groups, and they respond best to activities and learning situations relating to their interests and experiences. Although they have a short concentration span, they have great patience for the repetition of the same activity or game. Preschoolers answer well to concrete experiences and large-motor involvement in language learning.

O'Connor (2014) has emphasized that creativity in Early Childhood is essentially an important milestone in the development of creative thinkers and innovators in adult life. This opinion of pleasure as a central component of creativity development is an important consideration for the pedagogy of early years' educators.

2. Research Method

The survey method was used in this research. Using survey methods qualitative and quantitative data were gathered.

Research Questions

1. What do you mean by creativity?
2. Do you have experience using creativity in the teaching-learning process?
3. How language can be used to develop creativity
4. What are the strategies to develop creativity in preschool children?

Sample of the study

A representative sample was selected from Colombo District. The sample of the study is presented in the following table and different phases of the study are explained.

Table 2.1 Sample of the Study by Phase and Activity

Phase	Activity	The selected number of preschools	Sampling method	No. of preschools	No. of preschool teachers	No. of Children
Phase I	Mail questionnaire	100	Stratified random sampling	85	85	-
Phase II	Interviews with teachers	20	Purposive sampling	20	20	-
Phase III	Selection of 10 out of 32 activities	10	Purposive sampling (Preschools)	10	10	40 (4x 10) (Random)

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection was done from the selected samples which were stratified samples and purposive sampling methods. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the preschool teachers and an interview schedule was used to gather data from twenty preschool teachers from the total sample.

Data Collection and Procedure

In this study for the survey, 100 questionnaires were sent to the selected schoolteachers, and responses received were eighty-five. Government preschools and non-government preschools were representative in this sample.

Mail questionnaires and semi-structured interview schedules were pre-tested in a small sample of schoolteachers who did not participate in the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze data. (Qualitative and quantitative) Questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS statistically. Statistical analysis was done based on the responses to the survey using frequencies and percentages and presented them using tables. Data obtained through questionnaires were triangulated with data obtained from qualitative instruments such as from interviews were triangulated

3. Results and Analysis

The analysis of the data has been done under the following themes in line with the research questions of the study.

- Understanding of the teachers on concept of creativity
- Views of preschool teachers on the importance of creativity
- Methods used to enhance creativity in preschool children through language development
- Propose strategies to develop creativity in preschool children

Understanding of the Teachers on the Concept of Creativity

The following responses (Table 3.1) were given by the preschool teachers to the mail questionnaire related to their understanding of the concept of creativity.

Table 3.1 Understanding of Preschool Teachers on Creativity - Teachers' Responses*

Responses of teachers	Non-Government			Government		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Creatively drawing something or constructing something	24	18	42	03	02	05
New ideas/New creations	04	02	06	03	02	05
Presenting a role play	03	01	04	01	-	01
Developing collage	03	01	04	01	01	02
No response	10	06	16	00	01	01
Total	44	28	72	7	6	13

*Mail questionnaire

The majority, forty-seven (47.0%) of the teachers of Government and Non- Government preschools, both urban and rural preschool teachers, has responded saying that "Creativity is drawing something." Seventeen preschool teachers from both categories did not respond. Eleven preschool teachers from both categories have mentioned that the meaning of creativity is new ideas or new creations. The lack of understanding about creativity among preschool teachers in both categories of preschools was further reiterated when the responses of the interviewee sample were examined.

It was evident that most of the non-government preschool teachers of both urban and rural sectors did not have a clear understanding of creativity. Many thought creativity is just drawing or making something.

When the understanding of the concept of creativity from the twenty preschool teachers was explored through interviews, the following excerpts demonstrated how preschool teachers understand the concept of creativity.

"I do not know the exact answer, but I think creativity is drawing something" (Preschool No.1)

"I think it is drawing a picture" (Preschool No.3 and No.13)

"I think it is drawing a picture or collage (Preschool No.8 & No.9)

"I think it is developing collage" (Preschool No.7 No 10 and No.11)

"I think it is developing a collage or something" (Preschool No.12 and No. 19)

When analyzing the above statements, it is shown that eight teachers from non-government and one government teacher have mentioned drawing, collage, and a picture as creativity.

Some excerpts from interview responses are given below.

"I have no idea about that." (Preschool No 4 and No.6)

"I do not know the exact answer, but I think it is presenting a role play" (Preschool No.5)

"I think it is constructing new things" (Preschool No. 2, No.16, No.17, No.18, and No.20)

"My idea is "New thinking" "New ideas" (Preschool No.14 and No.15)

Two teachers from non-government preschools stated that they do not know anything about the concept and five teachers from both sectors have mentioned constructing new things like creativity. According to the information gathered although all the preschool teachers have more than eight years of experience, only two government preschool teachers (preschool No.14 and No. 15) were able to explain how to promote creativity through language development in preschool children. They said that "it is new thoughts or new ideas" which were meaningful and acceptable responses.

Views of Preschool Teachers on Importance of Creativity

To ascertain the extent of understanding among the preschool teachers, a statement was given in the mail questionnaire, requesting them to indicate their agreement/disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale on whether they have understood the importance of promoting creativity through language. The responses are given in Table 3.2

Table 3.2 Importance of Creativity through Language - Teachers' Responses *

Non-Government Sector	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total (%)
Urban	1(4.5)	--	3(6.8)	10(22.7)	29(65.9)	44
Rural	--	--	3(10.7)	8(28.6)	17(60.7)	28
Total	1(0.1)	--	6(8.3)	18(25.0)	46(50.0)	72
Government Sector						
Urban	-	--	--	2(22.2)	6(66.6)	8
Rural	--	--	1(27.2)	1(27.2)	3(54.5)	5
Total	-	--	1	3	9	13
Both sectors	2(2.5)	--	9(11.1)	22(27.2)	48(59.3)	85

*Mail questionnaire

The above table indicates that almost sixty percent of the teachers from the two sectors had indicated that they understand the importance of promoting creativity through language. Ideas about the importance of creativity were further examined with twenty teachers through interviews and compared with their teaching experience.

When interviewed, preschool teachers of four non-government preschools said that they did not know the importance of promoting creativity through language. Both non-government and government preschool teachers stated they understand the importance and expressed the desire to learn how to support to promote creativity in preschool children. Only one teacher who had twelve years of teaching experience said "I think it is difficult for young children"

Excerpts from the interviews are given below.

"I can't explain it. I am not aware of that clearly." (Preschool No.2)

"I can't say anything about it, if I had a clear idea, I could have improved the concept through activities with children." (Preschool No.5)

"I have not thought about this before, I believe creativity helps to improve intelligence in young children." (Preschool No.7)

"I think it is difficult for young children." (Preschool No.8)

"I am not aware of that, so I can't explain the importance of creativity." (Preschool No.10)

"Sorry, I have no idea about that." (Preschool No.12)

"I cannot give an exact answer, but they like to do new things if we provide resources." (Preschool No.16)

Two preschool teachers from the non-government sector have given acceptable answers on the importance of creativity but said they are not aware of the real meaning of creativity. The excerpts are given below.

"I think it is essential for our children. Teachers should know about that, if I know very well, I can support children." (Preschool No.1)

"I like to know about that. I like to study; I think children can make various things using materials." (Preschool No.9)

Two other teachers from the government preschools have given acceptable answers, e.g.

"It is important for young children if they develop creative thinking it will help for their future." (Preschool No.14)

"I did not think about this before, I believe creativity helps to improve intelligence in young children". They can make new things." (Preschool No.20)

About fifteen percent of preschool teachers have indicated that they have understood the importance of promoting creativity when they teach. Only ten percent of teachers had a clear idea of the importance of creativity as well as how to generate creativity during their teaching. This shows the majority of teachers (about 75 percent) were unaware of the importance of building creativity in children during the early stages of learning.

Methods used to enhance creativity in preschool children through language development
Teaching –Learning Methods

The responses to the mail questionnaire of teachers indicated that various methods such as the construction of puzzles, creative storytelling, discussion of pictures, discussion of the child experiences, play, reading materials, creative games, field trips, creative exercises in the picture and oral competitions were used to promote creativity through language. Most of the teachers of the non-government preschools, both urban and rural, strongly agreed that they use various methods to promote creativity, but the responses of the government preschool teachers seemed completely different. The majority of government preschool teachers responded that they either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement on whether they use various methods to promote creativity in preschool children. The responses are given in the table below.

Table 3.3 Using Various Methods to Promote Creativity - Teachers' Responses*

Response	Non-Government				Government			
	Urban	%	Rural	%	Urban	%	Rural	%
Strongly Disagree	-		-	-	3	37.05	2	40
Disagree	08	18.18	05	17.85	5	62.50	3	60
Neutral	02	4.54	02	7.14	-	-	-	-
Agree	-	-	02	7.14	-	-	-	-
Strongly Agree	34	77.27	19	67.85	-	-	-	-
Total	44	100.0	28	100.0	8	100.0	5	100.0

*Mail questionnaire

The majority of Non-Government teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that they used various methods to promote creativity when they teach. It was evident through interviews that the highest number of teachers agree with the above statement. However, when the researcher was observing the classrooms, it could be seen that most of the non-government sector preschools tried to introduce letters, simple sentences, numbers, and drawings.

Propose strategies to develop creativity in preschool children

Based on the experience the following aims were developed to create suitable activities to develop creativity through language.

1. Promote Creativity through improving communication skills
2. Express ideas considering future possibilities
3. Investigate and discover
4. Create doubtful suggestions
5. Describe a picture
6. Describe who they see
7. Completing a meaningful story

8. Play in the playhouse
9. Freedom to express ideas
10. Identifying connections between two things and reasons for them

The following activities were supported to develop creativity through language.

Activity 1. Circle Time/ Friendly chat

Activity should be organized to express ideas independently. Preschool teachers can organize the circle time any time for the day. There should be a free and friendly classroom environment. The teacher asks for some information from each child in an informal manner. The conversation carried out depends on response times.

Activity 2. What happens next?

The teacher has to present a sentence or sentences according to the picture, then ask the child to complete the balance.

Activity 3. What is inside?

First, take a small box and put a small thing into the box relevant to preschool children. Then covered the box teacher preferred a paper. Then ask each child to touch it and ask what it contains. The teacher should give hints and allow children to ask questions from the teacher. It should be within allocated adequate time.

Activity 4. What am I doing?

Talk with children about something they like or some activities. Inquire this from every child, give children opportunities to express their ideas. After that, they have to draw it. Then, discuss with a nearby friend and inquire what they are drawing. Finally, one by one explain to the teacher about a friend's picture.

Activity 5. What do you see in the picture?

Stating a description of something. Children of this group should be allowed to give descriptive explanations. Then each child describes the picture. In addition to what they see, they should be allowed to add something new and describe

Activity 6. Let us talk about the picture

Ask children to draw anything they like. Describing what they like or what they will never forget, to draw. Give the child an opportunity to speak out anything about the picture in his/her hand Describe the drawing to another person. From what the child has perceived, to express ideas which will help to develop creativeness.

Activity 7. Complete the story

Completing a meaningful story helps to promote creativity through speech. Providing the opportunity to children for imagination and to express own ideas are expected here. Children are enthusiastic to present their thinking based on their creative thinking.

Activity 8. Play in the playhouse

Through the temporary play hut, where freedom of expression of ideas is highly practicable for the child, can be considered as an ideal learning place for a child. Playing different roles will expand the child's imagination. Through these, the child can freely think and exchange ideas and materials and thereby get an opportunity to express ideas

Activity 9. Construct new things

It is possible to make new creations and direct the mind with a new look towards such activities by considering various things in the environment. Similarly, such activities help a lot to create an inquiring logical thinking mind in the child.

Activity 10. I know the connections

Identifying connectivity between two things is essential for young children to develop cognitive skills. Games support to develop their cognitive levels and make more fun. Involving different characters will allow children to introduce lots of new related language and stretch the child's creative skills. Roleplay is great for expanding the child's imagination and introducing new vocabulary.

4. Conclusion

Many teachers did not have a clear understanding of the concept of creativity, but all accepted the concept of creativity is important to develop in young children.

Even though they said that they use different kinds of methods when they teach children, when observing the classrooms, it was identified that most of them used traditional teaching methods. They spent more time drawing. However, it was important to practice various methods such as the construction of puzzles, creative storytelling, conversations, discussion of pictures/scenarios, discussion of the child experiences, play, creative games, creative exercises in the picture, poems, reading printed materials, drawing, role play, pretending characters.

This may contribute to their creativity and subsequently to language development. Very often such situations were not supportive to create new ideas or imaginations. Some preschools used workbooks either in their productions or purchased from the market. It was not directly supported to develop creativity due to the limitations of activities in those books.

Also, pre-writing and writing did not lead to promoting creativity. Children wrote only what the teacher wanted. Children were not allowed to express their views on what they should write. They did copy without any understanding. Most of the time was spent on drawing. No opportunity was given for children to suggest a topic for the drawing and no discussion was made even after completing the drawing. Although drawing can be an appropriate teaching-learning method to promote creativity through imagination, however, teachers did not properly use it.

The following conclusions were taken for activities that were implemented for children.

Activity No. 1

This type of friendly chat will be useful to generate conversations where children share their ideas freely. This provides an opportunity for every child to express their ideas creatively and expand the capacity for creative thinking based on the various scenarios.

Activity No. 2

In the activity, two children were given picture cards which helped them to start imagining things related to the picture. It was stimulation for them to express their views creatively. When they looked at a card, they were able to predict what will happen next. Those predictions were creative phrases. They added many new ideas. Children tended to tolerate ambiguity. Sometimes they explained the picture relating to their own experience. They explained how they could react with the scenario representing the items they see in the picture. This was a good intervention to motivate children to speak out. It opened many situations for children to use language creatively.

Activity No. 3

It was interesting to note children's reactions when they were asked to find out what is inside the box without opening it. It created a lot of creativity. Most of them came up with questions. It allowed improving their questioning skills. They were forced to ask questions by themselves to investigate and uncover information. Asking questions that provoke imaginative and creative thinking is an effective way to invite the child to express his/her ideas and share his/her visions. Their ideas originated freely. They were enthusiastic to know what is inside. Some children made inquiring responses and others gave direct guesses. This was an enjoyable activity, therefore even children who are normally not so talkative, also attempted to respond.

Activity No. 4

When children were asked to draw what they would like to draw they came up with a range of ideas. It provided children to be more descriptive and creative. What they drew were familiar to them and therefore they spoke freely. The facilitator can pose provoking questions so that the child's thinking can be improved to enable them to be creative. When children make long descriptions of their drawings, they used a wide vocabulary which benefited the child not only individually but also as a group to promote creativity.

Activity No.5

When children see a beautiful and meaningful picture with things that they are interested in they are motivated to describe what they see in the picture. They do not stop explaining what they see but continue to describe their feelings and imaginations. When they make their observations and imaginations, they try to relate them to their life experiences. There is plenty of opportunity for creative development as they try to understand relationships and connections between different things in the environment and what they see in the picture. It can be useful to enhance creativity with the full participation of children.

Activity No.6

A child was given a picture drawn by another child and asked to explain the picture. The comments children made were surprising. They found it was a joyful event. They were keen to make comments creatively. Certain expressions were very special because it was a new experience for them. These kinds of new approaches are good to generate creativity. Art is a creative expression that nurtures imagination, unlike a lesson in following directions.

Activity No. 7

Children had to complete a story. A part of the story was given by the facilitator. Children gave different ideas and completed the story. The story built by each child was unique. That exemplified creativity. They did not know the story flow in the original story. Therefore, it was entirely based on their own creativity. This can be made more effective by making the storytime impressive and discussing other possible scenarios or endings for the story by using the child's imaginations. Take turns making up a continuing story. This was a fruitful approach to promote creativity through language.

Activity, No.8

Children had the maximum freedom when they played in the playhouse. They expressed ideas freely. During role-playing, they wanted to have a wide range of words to express their feelings and to communicate with each other. Children enjoy this freedom and became more creative. As Wood, (2013) has stated "Early childhood education is underpinned by an ideological and theoretical tradition which regards play as essential to learning and development."

Activity, No.9

When constructing new things children were able to express ideas through innovations. While they are engaged in constructing, the teacher can ask questions about their creations. This is an appropriate way to promote creativity. This is also an opportunity for children to try out things. They used material to construct something, and they gave identifications as they wish. All these things enhance immense creativity.

Activity No. 10

"Games" is a highly influential approach in a preschool. The teacher shows a picture card and children are supposed to show a card that has some similarity to the card shown by the teacher. This happened actively. Children were enthusiastic to see whether they have any cards matching the teacher's cards. It was a challenge for them. Everybody could participate as well. When identifying similarities, they provided reasons and justification on how they connected their cards with the teacher's card. This needed critical thinking and as a result creativity through language development could take place. The following suggestions are proposed to be considered when developing a concept of creativity in young children.

Teacher should ask open-ended questions from children to think of the situation, therefore, "why" questions are important to inquire about their thoughts.

- Classroom environment should be changed according to themes.
- Teacher should listen to the children.
- It is necessary to change the teaching-learning methods.
- Group activities and individual activities are essential.
- Play method should be used in the classroom appropriately.
- Teacher should give her attention to children when they are engaging in activities.
- Teacher must give her attention to each child, and it is necessary to identify their capacity.
- Teachers should spend adequate time with children when they are engaging in activities.
- Teacher should appreciate children's work

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