

Dynamic Perspectives on Creativity in Higher Education

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Creativity in Higher Education

Education is: *“The supreme human interest in which....other problems, cosmological, moral, logical, come to a head”* (Hildebrandt, 2008, p. 124).

According to Dewey (1897), the purpose of education is to prepare us to survive and, hopefully, flourish in a future that is by nature uncertain.

A late, modern way of rephrasing Dewey is to say that education must somehow instil a creative capacity among its students and staff, because the future is uncertain and in various ways formed by what we do with it.

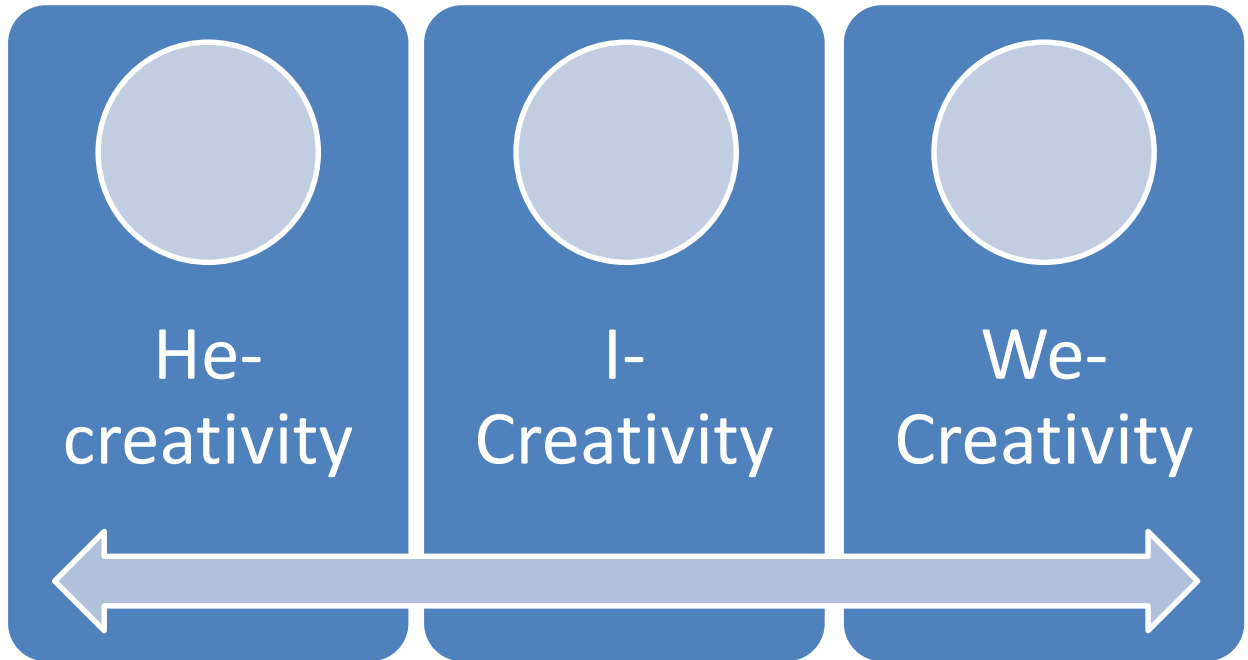
“Creativity is no longer a luxury for the few but a necessity for all.”
Csikszentmihalyi

CREATIVITY

Learning that leads to creativity entails actual work. Creativity builds on the ability to see clearer and to (re)discover what we know but seem to have forgotten

(Vera John-Steiner, 1997, p. 52)

A Dynamic Perspective



'Instant' Creativity?



"a result of a peculiarly American trust in gadgets and the injection of energy to speed things up"

Creativity – a result of Mastery and Craft

If you think creativity is all about yellow Post-Its, brainstorming and creative thinking you are lost in the woods. Creativity is more about mastery, craft and recycling. It's a lot more 'business as usual' than you might think.

Why creativity in HE?

“This (creative thinking, author) enables them (students, author) to take advantage of the availability of knowledge and subsequently devise innovative solutions to challenges encountered by various segments of society.”
(Crosling, Nair & Vaithilingam, 2015, p. 1114).

Agency is related to Quality in Education

“There is an emerging tendency in curriculum policy in the UK and elsewhere to acknowledge the importance of teachers’ agency – that is, their active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions – for the overall quality of education.”

(Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015, p. 624).

Innovative organisations are in need of creativity from all their employees



Staff involvement

- Staff involvement and empowerment supports a sense of creativity
(Tanggaard og Juelsbo 2015, Byrne, et.al., 2009; Trevelyan 2001).
- More jobsatisfaction and motivation when leaders apply a democratic and involving leadership style

Influence and Trust

- Tanggaard and Stadil (2012) find the same conditions in a study completed on Danish soil based on studies of, among others, leaders of Danish organizations, who are known for their creative approach and creative products. The study shows that a trust-based framework of tasks works most optimally, and the interviewees emphasize that motivation and job satisfaction are at their best, when economic and organizational frameworks allow the greatest possible influence on the organization of work.

Role-Models

- Trevelyan (2001): The research teams, where the researchers were most motivated and satisfied, were the ones in which management gave a general direction (often led by their own examples), were involved and provided feedback, but otherwise allowed some autonomy in solving the tasks.
- In addition, creativity-promoting leaders are more often able to act as innovative role models. They are intellectually stimulating, they provide appropriate feedback, acknowledge and "measure" the creativity of employees and offer resources so that it is actually possible to be creative (Trevelyan 2001; Mumford a.o. 2002).

Essential Internal Dimensions

- To give and share tasks
- To pass on so that others get opportunities
- To collaborate with everybody
- To be given responsibility and latitude
- Not to be controlled unnecessarily
- To use time wisely

Essential External Dimensions

- Strategic Obligation
- Innovative Competences and Potentials
- External Networks and Partnerships
- Organisation and Processes
- Cultural Obligation

From Individual Notions to a Dynamic 'We'

- Creativity involves democratic conditions and possibilities, which can be cultivated in education, while an understanding of creativity as an individual attribute (to be sold potentially) can erode social life and our abilities to immerse ourselves and reflect together.
- Creativity is dependent on time, tolerance, critical reflection and togetherness and can be hindered by an exclusive and busy focus on living up to standards and being ever more creative, understood as an individual attribute.

Humane Organisations

- We must build organisations that are designed for people
- The organisations must be forgiving, transparent, development-oriented and take responsibility
- It should not be 'up or out' cultures, but places where we say, "We can all succeed if we work together on the task"

(<https://joshbersin.com/2015/01/why-people-management-is-replacing-talent-management/>)

A Guide to Creativity

- 1. Start simple**
- 2. Work with things you like**
- 3. If you have no clue what you are doing then grope your way out**
- 4. Find a friend to work together with and share ideas with**
- 5. It is OK to steal other's ideas (as long as you credit your source)**
- 6. Make notes about your ideas**
- 7. You do not hit the mark first time. Try again.**
- 8. Many things can go wrong. Keep on going.**
- 9. Do not be afraid to experiment**
- 10. Create your own advice**

Source: Mitchel Resnick (MIT Professor, Kreativ tænkning, Klim, 2019)



Thank you for your attention!