

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Nicoleta, Belu¹
Alina, Voiculescu²

Abstract:

At a societal and individual level, the educational process is generating change by creating value. The main actors involved in the educational process - society, school, family, individual, other institutions or organizations - have an essential role in developing an effective education and training system.

The educational level of a people, the knowledge stock held at a given moment, reflected in the ability of individuals, their competence and creativity, underlie economic and social development.

In a knowledge-based society, the central element is creativity, that characteristic of the human mind that has the power to innovate, to offer original solutions and ideas, based on accumulated knowledge and experience. Under these circumstances, any performance education system must be based on creativity and innovation, elements that are interconnected.

Keywords: *education system, education, creativity, innovation, performance.*

JEL Classification: *I2*

1. Introduction

The education level of a people, their knowledge amount held at a particular moment, reflected in individuals' ability, competence and creativity underlie economic and social growth. The rapid changes in today's society urge the need for improving the educational process where competitiveness and innovation play central roles. The educational process generates progress through the changes it brings to both an individual and to the society as a whole. Therefore, effective educational policies must envisage the individual-school-society relationship, a relationship where man is both the determining element and the determining factor at the same time.

Nowadays, the most valuable investment is investing in people, in human capital in general and in education in particular. The educational system is the one creating identities, shaping personalities, educating and developing a person. An efficient educational system is one that develops a free, harmonious, dignified, creative personality. Good quality education must be based on spontaneous, personal and especially creative activities. Thus, spirits get harmonized, feelings get stabilized, self-control develops.

Education is the one that provides children, young people and adults with the knowledge and skills needed to become active and highly performing on the labour market. For these reasons, accessing quality education has become an essential objective at the level of the European Union in order to create an innovative, knowledge-based society.

2. Creativity - Core of Highly Performing Education

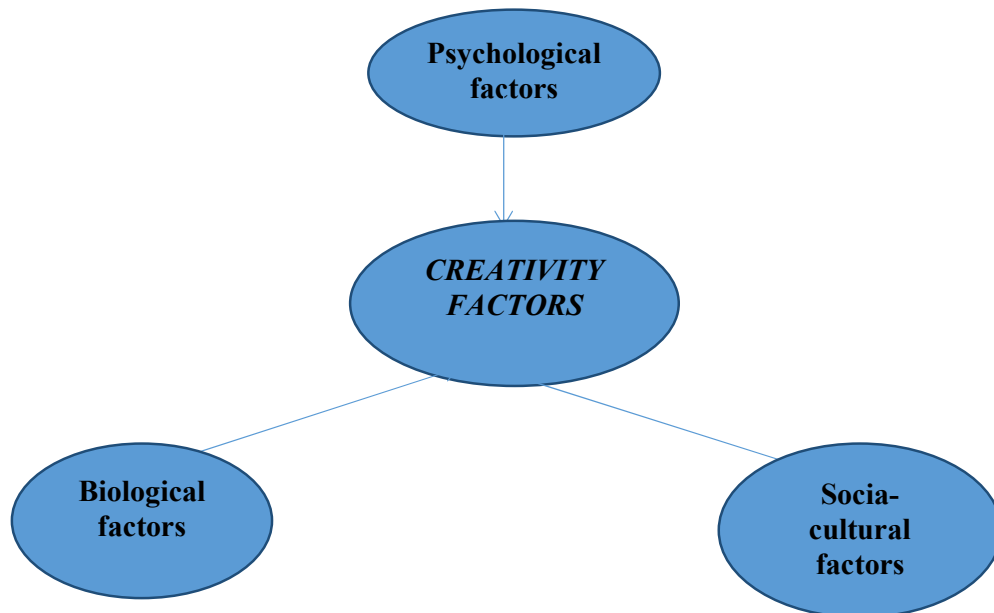
Generally speaking, any education system with an education and training function emphasizes the complex development of an individual's personality. An educational institution is the place where people grow, develop, educate and train, relying on the creative spirit, on the development of logical thinking, on communication and cooperation.

Creativity, the ability of the human mind, allows the generation of new ideas and concepts, synthesizing factors of intellectual, motivational, emotional and attitude type, specifying that novelty consists both in genuineness and efficiency.

¹ PhD Associate Professor, "Constantin Brâncoveanu" University of Pitești, nicolbelu@yahoo.com

² PhD Associate Professor, "Constantin Brâncoveanu" University of Pitești

Figure 1. Creativity factors



Source: prepared by the authors

The *psychological factors* of creativity have often been confined to the intellectual ones, namely creative imagination, thinking, intelligence, intuition, memory. Defined by Plato as being "the ability that allows the human spirit to understand the order of the universe," intelligence operates with notions and is strictly dependent on the laws of the knowledge object. If one regards things from the perspective of the creativity-intelligence ratio, it can be stated on a scientific basis that a large number of creative people are also intelligent, but not all intelligent people are creative. Instead, imagination uses complex, dynamic images based on associations and combinations that lead to the emergence of genuine ideas. Nowadays, the category of psychological factors has also included other factors such as: special skills (which enable performance in certain fields), non-intellectual and non-skill factors, abyssal factors (determined by the direct connection between creation and unconsciousness). *Biological factors* are related to heredity, age, gender, health, and *social-cultural factors* are related to social-economic, cultural and, above all, educational conditions.

Creativity occurs at various levels:

- *expressive-behavioural level* which targets the psychic traits involved directly: spontaneity, responsiveness, flexibility, associativity;
- *procedural level*, which emphasizes the creative qualities of the psychic mechanisms structured in an intellectual style of creative approach, a style that ensures reaching new products at the subjective level;
- *productive level* where creative skills are embodied in new products with a relatively low degree of genuineness and value;
- *innovative level* at which some creativity factors such as ingenuity, operability facilitate the development of new products;
- *inventive level* where the most important psychic features are the ability of abstraction and generalization, setting associations and analogies;
- *emergent level* where the products obtained consist of principles, theories which revolutionize a certain field.

Creativity is cultivated through learning, behaviour, intellectual skills. Creativity is "something" that can be developed in most people, being a general human trait, which is the reason why people can be categorized on a creativity scale at different levels. In a plastic way, it is said: *creativity is the wide open window which gives wings to imagination and shapes and fulfilment to dreams*. Individual development is based on education and training, on inter-human relationships, on effective communication, a complex process where school plays an essential role, creating independence in thinking and expression.

Educating the creative spirit at school level implies:

- valuing the belief according to which creative learning is the basis
- of interaction between intellectual efficiency and school performance - teaching innovation - evaluation;
- encouraging spontaneity, stimulating creative potential with emphasis
- on active learning;
- developing an optimal creative environment, cancelling blockage
- factors.

Pedagogical creativity implies a number of qualities that a teacher uses in designing and delivering effective activities, centered on the permanent innovation of the educational process. From the perspective of one that educates, cultivates and teaches values, a teacher is the one who plans organizes, conducts, coordinates, evaluates the entire didactic activity. He/she is the one that facilitates creative behaviour in schools, accepts and encourages new solutions, tolerates non-conformism, stimulates confidence in one's own judgments, independence and originality of thinking.

All those considerations are based on changes in the way of thinking and working which must also take into account the personality of an individual. A teacher is the one who first needs to cultivate their creative skills, apply them in the teaching process and at the same time stimulate creativity among the ones they train.

No educational institution should confine itself to transmitting knowledge but it must seek solutions to discover the potential of learners, relying mainly on curiosity and creative search, openness to new ideas, both school and extra-curricular ideas, on increasing self-confidence, on flexibility in instructive-educational activity.

The goal of any creative education is to give every individual the chance to use their potential to the maximum, given the fact that there is a risk that the education process might train conforming people, with numerous, striking stereotypes.

3. Educational Innovation

At educational level, innovation mainly aims at identifying opportunities, developing strategies to generate performance. In any educational process, more than in other types of social processes, there is a relationship between old and new which is almost indestructible, with changes being made in a quite difficult manner, by adopting new techniques and practices.

Educational innovation can be defined as the complex process that generates changes in educational structures and practices, changes that generate progress. Changes brought about by educational innovation integrated and assimilated into educational practice can be didactic and pedagogical, investment changes in order to provide the necessary resources and changes in values and orientations.

Table1. Factors of Educational Innovation

No.	Typology	Specification
1	Factors operating at environment level	general change; change players; change strategies.
2	Factors operating at institution level	players' perception; strategy creation; strategy implementation.
3	Factors operating at department level	work environment; teachers' activities – risk assuming, innovative techniques for teaching/learning/evaluation etc.
4	Factors operating at class level (teachers and pupils/students)	change favourable attitude or change resistance within the teacher group; work motivation and satisfaction or lack of interest; school organizational culture.

Source: prepared by the authors

The main levels of innovation in the educational process are:

a. *structure and organization*, appreciating the fact that innovation has the greatest chance of success in a decentralized education system, because it allows the transfer of responsibilities, it involves different players in the educational process, it creates the conditions for direct participation in the decision-making process;

b. *content* targeting all the knowledge, information which is to be conveyed, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, training the learners regarding skills, abilities, lifelong innovative learning practices. Additionally, there is focus on the skills that are to be formed in order to cope with the challenges of today's society, knowledge-based society;

c. *educational environment*, in the sense of creating relationships based on trust, collaboration, respect, with all the players involved in the instructive-educational process. Therefore it is the need to create a high-performing school culture favourable to innovation.

Current educational systems show a strong innovation trend, a complex, varied process determined by socio-historical factors along with political, cultural, scientific, technological and economic factors. In the educational system there is a need for systematic and continuous research, flexibility, adaptive structures, and especially an anticipatory and proactive attitude.

Innovation in the educational process must focus on exploration, discovery, encouragement of critical thinking, active participation of everyone in their intellectual training and development. On the basis of such considerations, one can highlight the direct relationship between education and development, where education plays a launching role as both curricular education performed through the education process and extra-curricular education outside school directly contribute in one's training for life.

4. Conclusions

Modern world nowadays focuses on creativity and innovation. In order to keep up with changes, it is always necessary to creatively adapt, because in every individual and every age there is potential creativity.

Creative potential can be developed through appropriate education where the main role is played by the educational process. It is school that cultivates and develops creative potential, promoting active learning based on research, discovery, own independent or coordinated effort. Any unusual situation lived at a particular time, a positive situation, of

course, develops one's spirit of initiative, creativity, success, thus fostering innovation in the educational process.

In any type of society, the educational system is a product and a value of social growth at a certain time. Today's educational effort to train tomorrow's generation must rely on skills, imagination, divergent thinking, creative learning, thus forming one's personality based on free initiative and self-confidence.

The development of creativity and innovation in the educational process relies on the implementation of modern educational management where ensuring the balance among quality, efficiency, equity and diversity is the prerequisite for the training of young people for the future.

References:

- 1 Ionescu, M., *„Demersuri creative în predare și învățare” (Creative Approaches to Teaching and Learning)*, Presa Universitară Clujeană Publisher, Cluj-Napoca, 2000;
- 2 Roco, M., *„Creativitate și inteligență emoțională” (Creativity and Emotional Intelligence)*, Polirom Publisher, Iași, 2004;
- 3 Sălăvăstru, D., *„Psihologia educației” (Education Psychology)*, Polirom Publisher, Iași, 2004;
4. Suciu, M.-C., *„Investiția în educație” (Education Investment)*, Economică Publisher, Bucharest, 2000.