

Chapter 16

On Creativity of Asian and American Asian Students

Joohyun Pyune
Essex County College, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines ways to encourage Asian and American Asian students to learn how to use their creativity and develop their independent cognitive thinking skills. It is greatly beneficial for the Asian American students to embrace and understand both cultures. Exercises are described that are designed to help students improve their creative thinking skills and combine ideas from both their cultures naturally. Further discussion is proposed that would analyze the presumed students' thought processes and define future assessment of the efficiency of particular exercises by testing students' solutions and abilities.

INTRODUCTION

There are many up and coming Asian artists, many of them growing up in the U.S., even though the majority of them consider themselves Americans. Perhaps their way of processing visual materials may be different from the Anglo-Americans. They assimilate two different cultures and can speak a minimum of two languages, which may improve their cognitive learning skills early on (Holliday, 2013). This paper analyzes and compares some aspects of the educational system in the arts existing in Asia with that in the United States. Asian American students greatly benefit when both cultures are combined and fused. What is believed is that for the Asians, there is a great

need for individual creativity, which is already promoted and encouraged both in the U.S. and Asia as well.

BACKGROUND

Thinking Skills and Creativity

It is not surprising that now more than ever, there are a great number of successful Asian art students. They have been trained well in their craft because of the intensive, long hours of disciplined art education, which include detailed directions and specific techniques in terms of drawing and painting. However, individual creativity is not

stressed or even encouraged because of their high expectation within a short period of time. A lesser skilled student may have more potential to be creative and produce higher level of artwork with their own voice. It does not mean that the instructor in Asia does not value creativity. It is more about a 'cultural character,' which is based on, among other things, quick and impressive results (Holliday, 2013). Without creative solutions of the artists the institute would not survive from the brutal competition.

The creative activity of students and their artwork is directed and planned, not by students but by directions from their teachers. Therefore, the final work of art looks great, but the student voice is missing in many cases. This type of education relies on memorization and following the direction rather than understanding of the subject or creative art resulting from their own thoughts (Gardner, 1994; 1997). In this way, the student's thinking skills are minimized and ability of visualization cannot be developed (Boden, 2009, 2010). Therefore, less formalized instruction may help students to use their creative part, which they do not have much opportunity to use and develop (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; 1998).

In a mind boggling world, knowledge visualization and visual thinking are gaining in significance in every aspect of science, business, and society. Simple and advanced visual methodologies are aimed at the backing of the creation, application, and correspondence of knowledge and bits of knowledge, especially in circumstances where individuals from distinctive instructive, social, and expert foundations team up (Boden et.al, 2009). Whilst Information Visualization (IV) concentrates on the utilization of machine based devices to investigate substantial information sets, Knowledge Visualization (KV) and Visual Thinking examine (a) how to make and exchange experiences in the groups of people and inside gatherings, (b) how to oversee and decrease unpredictability and to permit comprehension, and (c) how to help learning, correspondence, and cooperation

through new methodologies and procedures. Knowledge visualization encourages the common exchange of certainties, experiences, encounters, values, desires, points of view, conclusions, and expectations. Specialists and professionals in the areas of knowledge visualization and visual thinking create methodologies, instruments, and strategies to make knowledge noticeable and to enhance forms through which knowledge might be distinguished, gotten to, evaluated, imparted, talked about, and connected to easily manageable tasks (Florida, 2014).

Cross Cultural Differences

Cultural attributes of Asian societies are often cited as the main cause for the alleged behavior of reticence and passivity, which may negatively affect students' thinking skills. Confucianism influences Asian students' creativity. Confucianism makes student more obedient and makes them place at the top of the list what other people think about them and their work. It is one of the big obstacles to being creative and inventive. Even though the new generations of Asians are becoming more self-aware and self-centered, the traditional beliefs characteristic of Confucianism have a great hold on becoming more open-minded.

The United States is a diverse country racially and ethnically. There are six ethnic groups recognized: white, Native American Indian and Native Alaskan, Asian, black or African American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and persons of two or more races. A category "other race" on the census and other surveys is also used, but is not official. The Americans are also classified as "Hispanic or Latino" for identifying Hispanics and Latinos as an ethnic group of different races that make up the largest minority group in the nation. According to the estimates of the Population Estimates Program (PEP, 2012), the White Americans are the racial majority, making up 80% of the total population of the USA. The estimate of the American Community Survey (ACS,

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