

# Chapter 4

## Creative Pedagogy for Literacy Instruction

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter intends to provide a definition for the multi-faceted concept of creativity, describe components of the creative process, identify potential barriers to nurturing creativity, and present an explanation of creative pedagogy. The author believes that the pervasiveness of literacy in all subject matter provides an ideal mechanism for training preservice teachers in creative pedagogy. Throughout the chapter, the reader will find descriptions of activities that promote creativity through literacy instruction and examples of creative pedagogy in a preservice teacher education course.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Creativity is at the forefront of the latest education shifts across the globe, with educational systems regarding creativity as having the potential to improve individuals' ability to solve complex societal and economic issues. Throughout the world, experts in education consider creativity a crucial goal. Reports that *schools kill creativity* (Robinson, 2006) and evidence that teachers may not nurture creativity at the level needed for complex modern problems reflects a need for explicit instruction in creative pedagogy (Bloom & Dole, 2018). While teachers claimed to highly value creativity, discrepancies were reported between teachers' assertions and actual classroom practices (Austin, 2021; Cho et al., 2017). The development of creativity within education may be at odds with the current system. However, the integration of creative pedagogy within the classroom is not impossible. The pervasiveness of literacy in all subject matter provides an ideal mechanism for training preservice teachers and practicing educators in creative pedagogy. The goal of this chapter is to provide a definition for the multi-faceted concept that is creativity, expound upon the creative process, identify barriers to nurturing creativity, and present an explanation of creative pedagogy. Throughout the chapter, the reader will find a repertoire of activities that promote creativity through literacy instruction and concrete examples of creative pedagogy in a preservice teacher education program.

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## **BACKGROUND**

Before discussing creative pedagogy or methods of fostering creativity in the classroom, it is important to supply a definition for creativity from an educational perspective. There is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of creativity and the creative process (Bloom & Dole, 2018; Lin, 2011). Merriam-Webster defines *creativity* as “the ability to create” and defines the term *creative* as “having the quality of something created rather than imitated.” Singha et. al., (2020) noted that standard definitions for creativity indicate an outcome or end-product that is of value.

In most definitions, the end product and its function are listed as components of defining creativity. However, Martin (2009) and others opposed the inclusion of an end product in the definition stating that creativity can be present without actually creating. Primarily, the argument was against assigning value or judgment of creative practices and products because of the limited scope created by the necessity of production. While the argument may be valid outside of education, the inclusion of an end product or actual creation fits within the realm of teaching and learning (Zbainos & Tziona, 2019).

Defining creativity to include the production of something new as well as unique has been the standard for decades (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). In addition, originality often referred to as novelty, is also a critical aspect and valuable result of creativity. Collard and Looney (2014) claimed that people with the highest levels of creativity tend to find the best solutions in the shortest amount of time or with the highest efficiency, further confirming an end product and its usefulness, or *fitness*, as deemed important by Ambile (1982). Ambile noted that in order for a creative product or idea to be useful, it must fit within the context, deeming the term *fitness*. In other words, a creative end product will bring numerous aspects into account and create a product that meets the various needs and requirements. Runco and Jaeger (2012) also pointed out that originality must couple with usefulness and appropriateness, or *fitness*.

Based on a systematic literature review of approaches to measuring creativity, Said-Metwaly et al. (2017) stated, “Researchers generally agree that creativity involves the production of novel and useful responses” (p. 243). For the purpose of creativity within the field of education, the definition of The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999), is a reasonable choice: “an imaginative activity fashioned to build outcomes that are original and of value.” Using this definition, training in creative pedagogy can build upon the creative process with an identifiable outcome or end product.

## **THE CREATIVE PROCESS**

Creative singer, songwriter, and author Peter Andrews (2019) described creativity as the incarnation of an idea. Clarke and Cripps’ (2012) explain that creativity is “a transformative process of knowing, thinking and doing that embodies elements such as risk-taking, envisaging, engaging, persisting, observing, experimenting, attending to relationships, taking a benign attitude to error and critically reflecting” (p. 114). The creative process is evolutionary, with constant questioning and revisiting while making associations between prior knowledge and experiences to new concepts; this form of divergent thinking, in and of itself, is a creative process. Divergent thinking allows students to view problems from more than one perspective and find solutions by combining associations (Guilford, 1950). Learners must accept frustration and uncertainty while making connections between previous experiences and new information.

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