

The Role of Creativity in Music Education

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Abstract

This literature review examines the role of creativity in music education, synthesizing existing research to identify gaps and propose future directions. Recognized globally as a critical 21st-century skill, creativity's abstract nature makes it challenging to define. The review traces the evolution of creativity research, from Guilford's foundational work to Torrance's process-oriented definitions. Various models, including Rhodes' 4P model and Kaufman and Beghetto's Four C model, offer comprehensive frameworks for understanding creativity. The relationship between creativity and intelligence is explored, highlighting the need for educational approaches that nurture both. Creative thinking, characterized by divergent thinking, is crucial for generating multiple solutions to problems. Traits such as curiosity, flexibility, risk-taking, and intrinsic motivation are identified as essential for fostering a creative personality. The review emphasizes the importance of creative teaching methodologies and their impact on student development. It also explores music creation teaching through various educational systems, underscoring its role in cultivating students' imagination and creative abilities. Overall, the review highlights the necessity of integrating creativity into educational practices to enhance cognitive and emotional development in students.

Keywords

Music Education; Creative Thinking; Creative Teaching, Intelligence and Creativity; Creative Personality; Divergent Thinking; Music Creation Teaching; Educational Methods; Cognitive Development

1. Introduction

The literature review was carried out to relate this study to the existing literature on creativity, teaching activities, and music. This literature review involves a thorough synthesis and analysis of relevant literature to identify research needs (Smith et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2021). This chapter progresses from broad to specialized topics using a top-down method. Initially, a summary of the variables is provided. Following that, ideas and models are described, and previous studies are elaborated on. The chapter also discusses and explains the theories underpinning the research, before presenting a theoretical framework. Finally, significant gaps highlighted in the literature review are summarized (Williams et al., 2021).

2. Creativity

Creativity has been globally recognized as an essential skill for the 21st century, determining one's subsequent success (Ekhoﬀ, 2011; Siti Zakiya & Norazira, 2011). The importance of this skill has prompted researchers to develop definitions to determine what creativity entails.

2.1 The Concept of Creativity

Defining creativity has been considered a complex quest because of its relatively vague and complex nature (Eckhoff, 2011; Johnson, 2007). Reuter (2007) argues that the difficulty in reaching a consensus definition of creativity is one of the reasons for the neglect of creativity research.

In 1950, Guilford was the first to call for creative academic work. Since then, more research has been done on creativity. Tan (2007), in his edited volume "Creativity: A Handbook for Teachers," includes articles from various scholars such as Kim et al. (2008) that laid the foundations for creativity and music education. Guilford (1950) defined creativity as "the most characteristic ability of creative people," which means that creativity depends on a person's motivational and temperamental characteristics. According to Guilford, traits in this context mean "any relatively enduring way in which one person differs from another." A person's behavior can be organized according to categories of ability, interest, attitude, and temperamental qualities.

Torrance (1963) defines creativity as "the process of perceiving problems or gaps in information, forming ideas or hypotheses, testing and modifying those hypotheses, and communicating the results." A few years later, he explained in great detail that creative behavior involves becoming sensitive to problems or gaps, bringing together available information in new ways, defining the difficulty, searching for solutions, and finally communicating the results (Torrance, 1970).

Carter cites Gandini (1992), who argues that creativity is a novel idea, solution, or result based on previous experience and learning. According to Nirenberg (1982), every time a person does something new for themselves, that person is creative. This view is accepted by other researchers, with Eisenberg and Cameron (1998) stating that "creative performance refers to novel behavior that meets quality," and Sternberg (2001) defining creativity as the potential to generate new ideas that fit the task and have high quality (Smith et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2023).

Starko (1995) argues that a product or idea is considered creative as long as it has an original or novel value to the individual creator. Honig (2000) proposes that creative products need to be practical or meet certain criteria, arguing that creativity is related to breaking old ideas and drawing new relationships, expanding the intellect, and making original connections. This led to Rhodes's (1961) 4P model of creativity, which includes person, process, product, and press.

King (2007), Peterson and Madsen (2010), Rozmann (2009), Lenco (2012), Lenco and Pritzer (1999), and Webster (1990a, 1990b, 1994, 2002, 2009) also wrote about creativity, emphasizing how it gives students new ways to explore music learning. Harding (2010) studied the relationship between fostering creativity and leadership and change. Webster has published several articles discussing creative thinking in music, including composition, acting (improvisation), and analysis.

Alkuş and Olgan (2014) focus on the creative process and experience, while others define creativity based on the final product. In primary education, researchers believe the focus should be on process-oriented creative development rather than the results (Oconnor, 2014; Saracho, 2012; Sharp, 2004).

Sternberg and Luart (1993) admit that acquiring knowledge does not make an individual creative, but useful knowledge helps generate novel ideas and produce high-quality work. However, knowledge in a specific domain can also limit one's perspective and reduce the ability to generate new ideas (Lee et al., 2020; Martinez et al., 2021).

2.2 The Relationship Between Creativity and Intelligence

Research on creativity is directly related to studies of cognitive abilities and intelligence. The American Psychological Association (1995) defines intelligence as the ability to understand complex ideas, adapt effectively to the environment, learn from experience, engage in reasoning, and overcome obstacles.

Guilford (1956; 1967) used divergent and convergent thinking as part of his model of intelligence, which consists of content, product, and operation dimensions. This approach aims to represent the behavioral aspects that create content, the systems involved in the product, and all relevant cognitive influences.

Studies show that the correlation between intelligence and creativity is not high for people with an IQ above 130, but the relationship is non-linear (Jauk et al., 2013). The development of creativity and intelligence is not synchronized because creativity involves divergent thinking and intuitive thinking. Developing non-intellectual factors through certain teaching means can enhance creative ability, presenting new challenges to education.

2.3 Creative Thinking

Creative thinking has been defined in various ways. Cropley (2012) defined it as generating novel and original ideas that

are appropriate and valuable. Guilford's (1950) Structure of Intellect (SI) model identified two types of thinking processes: convergent and divergent thinking. Divergent thinking, characterized by the ability to generate multiple solutions to a problem, is a key aspect of creative thinking (Runco & Acar, 2012).

Kaufman and Beghetto's (2009) Four C model differentiates creativity into mini-c, little-c, pro-c, and Big-C levels, helping understand how creative thinking manifests differently across contexts (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2023). Creative thinking is domain-specific and influenced by specific situations (Han & Marvin, 2012).

All children should have the opportunity to think and express themselves creatively (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2001). Predictions about which children will become highly creative and productive are known to be falsely inaccurate, as these talents develop over time and are influenced by play and opportunity (Ghazali et al., 2023; Hutton et al., 2024).

Creative impulses are important for personal, social, and economic success (Shi et al., 2020; Shu et al., 2020). Creativity is essential for flexibility, adaptability, and resourcefulness in a rapidly changing world. It benefits children emotionally by providing spontaneous pleasure, self-expression, and satisfaction. Research shows that recognizing and evaluating creative abilities improves academic performance (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

2.4 Creative Personality

The concept of "creative personality" was introduced by Guilford. He distinguished between "narrow creativity" (specific abilities representing creative characteristics) and "broad creativity" (creative personality). Research identifies several traits relevant to primary school students: curiosity, flexibility, risk-taking, and motivation (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2013; Russ, 2014).

Curiosity involves exploring and learning about the world, encouraging the generation of novel ideas (Jirout & Klahr, 2012; Engel, 2015). Flexibility allows for adapting to changing situations and generating diverse solutions (Zabelina & Robinson, 2012; Dumas & Dunbar, 2014). Risk-taking encourages resilience and exploring unconventional ideas (Sternberg, 2018; Lucas et al., 2013). Intrinsic motivation fosters engagement and focuses on the process (Amabile, 2012; Beghetto & Kaufman, 2013).

3. Creative Teaching

3.1 The Concept of Creative Teaching

Creative teaching involves fostering creativity and developing students' creativity through knowledge impartation and intelligence development. It emphasizes the application of knowledge, inspiration, and self-initiative exploration, divergent thinking, and learning with flair (Ci Hai Dictionary, 2016).

3.2 The Process of Creative Teaching

Creativity is a modifiable, deliberate process that exists to some degree in everyone (Ford & Harris, 1992). Wallas (1926) presented a four-stage model of the creative-thinking process: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. This model has been recognized by many theorists and researchers about creativity.

Preparation involves identifying and defining a problem, gathering raw material, and observing. Incubation is the internalization and unconscious processing of the problem. Illumination is the sudden emergence of a new idea. Verification involves elaborating and revising ideas to present them to others (Wallas, 1926; He'lie & Sun, 2010).

3.3 Relationship Between Creative Teaching and Student Development

Past studies show that creative teaching supports student creativity and engagement (Davies et al., 2013; Craft, 2012; Henriksen & Mishra, 2015). However, there is a gap in examining the impact of creative teaching on cognitive domains and academic outcomes and excessive reliance on quantitative methods.

4. Music Creation and Teaching

4.1 Overview of Music Creation Teaching

In the 20th century, various music education systems emphasized music creation teaching to cultivate students' imagination and creativity. Notable systems include Dalcroze's somatic rhythm teaching, Kodály's singing teaching, Orff's improvisation, comprehensive music education, and Coleman's creative music instruction (Ng & Hartwig, 2019; Peters, 2020; Silva & Batey, 2021; Thompson & Morrison, 2022).

5. Music Creation Teaching in China's Current Music Curriculum Standards

The Ministry of Education of China issued the Art Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education in 2022, emphasizing "emotional" and "creative" aspects. The curriculum includes appreciation, performance, creation, and connection activities, integrating music with social life, other disciplines, nature, and technology.

6. Conclusion

The literature review highlights the importance of creativity in music education and the need for creative teaching methods. The relationship between creativity and intelligence, the concept of creative thinking, and the traits of a creative personality are essential for fostering creativity in students. Creative teaching processes and their impact on student development are also discussed. Music creation teaching has a significant role in developing students' creative abilities, and current curriculum standards in China emphasize the integration of creative practices in music education.

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