

Fostering Creativity Among Secondary School Adolescents: Roles of Mothers and Teachers

Nnubia, U.E

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture
Umudike, Abia State

and

Madichie, W.N

Federal College of Education (Tech),
Umunze, Orumba- South L. G. Area
Anambra- State

Abstract

This study investigated roles of mothers and teachers in fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents. It was a survey. Three research questions guided the study. The population comprised of all mothers in Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze and all the secondary school teachers in Orumba-South Local Government Area of Anambra-State. Questionnaire was used for data collection and mean was used for analysis. Findings include; 10 factors militating against fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents, 8 roles of mothers and 8 roles of teachers for fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents were also identified. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which include parents especially mothers providing materials and encouraging creative activities among their adolescent children to increase their cognitive flexibility and idea generation skills.

Key Words: Creativity, Fostering, Adolescent, Mother and Teacher.

Introduction

The word creativity is linked with the origin itself. It is from the Latin word "creare" which means "to make". Creativity therefore is the process of producing something that is characterized by originality, expressiveness and imagination. According to Craighead and Nemeroff (2004), creativity is a term that can be

used to describe the process of bringing something new into being by becoming sensitive to gaps in human knowledge, identifying these deficiencies, searching for their solution, making guesses as to a potential solution, testing one's hypotheses and communicating the final result. Runco (2004), views creativity as an important element in the recombination of elements, to produce

new technologies and product and consequently, economic growth. Creativity therefore, is any act, idea or product that changes an existing domain into a new one.

Creativity requires hard work, long training, unrelenting criticism, perfectionist standard an atmosphere that is free from stress, openness to experiences and lack of rigidity, acceptance of one's own evaluation, ability to toy with concepts and to shape wild hypothesis. According to Onu and Ikeme (2008) it includes ability to generate new and lots of ideas, flexibility as opposed to rigidity, associate and linked facts and brainstorm, analyze and incubate. Some of the characteristics of a creative personality include: having a great deal of energy, often quiet and at rest, smart yet naïve, playfulness, discipline, responsible, imaginative and fantasy, harbours opposite tendencies on the continuum between extroversion and introversion, remarkably humble and proud at the same time etc. Creative individual therefore should respect the irrational element in himself and trust that he will be able to produce a new order from them (Barron, 1989)

Creativity like any other gift is of both genetic and environmental factor that needs maturity before it blossoms (Uzor, 1996). It is seen as synonymous with productive thinking, divergent thinking, critical thinking and even problem solving. Components or underlying factors of the creative process could be approached by looking at how creative product is measured or evaluated. The most common criteria

according to Sandeep (2012) for the evaluation include:

* **Flexibility:** This captures the ability to cross boundaries and makes remote association. This is measured by number of different categories of ideas generated.

* **Originality:** This measures how statistically different or novel ideas are compared to a comparison group. This is measured by the number of novel ideas generated.

* **Fluency:** This captures the ability to come up with many diverse ideas quickly. This is measured by the total number of ideas generated.

* **Elaboration:** This measure the amount of detail associated with the idea. Elaboration has more to do with focusing on each solution/idea and developing it further.

Fostering creativity skills is of great importance in the life of adolescents as this group of people is the future leaders, developers, builders of any country. Again, since technology is advancing our society at an unprecedented rate, creative problem solving will be needed to cope with these challenges as they arise. At adolescence stage, educational input must be at its height in order to get the greatest output. Therefore, the need for creative teaching cannot be overemphasized in the life of adolescents because it offers them the opportunity of always having independent judgment in whatever they are doing. It equips them with the skill of autonomy, developing their personality traits, use of intuition,

proper utilization of their environment, attraction to complexity etc. According to Barron & Harrington (1981), fostering creativity in the life of adolescents give them ability to resolve paradoxes or to accommodate apparently opposite or conflicting aspect of one's self-concept, having firm sense of one's self as creative. Mothers as the first teachers of children should always provide opportunities for choice and discovery for children in order to develop creative mind. However, when mothers deliberately planned creative activities for children especially the adolescent, new ideas will begin to emerge, and implementation of these new ideas taken through processes will ensure quality services thereby given room for sustainability.

In the Nigerian educational system, especially at secondary school level, government emphasis is on providing technical and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development which calls for creative teaching for this goal to be achieved (National Policy on Education, 2004). According to Omeke (2011) promoting intrinsic motivation and problem solving are two areas where creativity can be fostered in students. He went further to say that students are more creative when they see a task as intrinsically motivating, valued for its own sake. However, to promote creativity, educators should identify what motivates students and structure teaching round it. Uko-Aviomoh (2005), noted that to teach creatively, teachers should use a variety of instructional materials and techniques, engage in

series of research in order to be adequately equipped to deliver their lessons creatively and provide learners with opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. Teachers may also employ the method of brain-storming and creative problem solving by teaching the students how to generate un-usual ideas, encouraging acquisition of domain-specific knowledge. However, according to Ezenwanne (2007) and Anene-Okeakwa (2002), many teachers teach without instructional materials or laboratory facilities. Some of them teach mostly theoretical concepts and mostly adopt lecture method of teaching which stifle creativity among students. The present quest for fostering creativity among learners makes it imperative that teachers and mothers should help in giving instructional activities that promote creativity skill needed for poverty reduction. Oloido (2000) remarked that the absence of creativity skills among adolescents and school leavers is an impediment to sustainable development, which if not tackled would continue to incite and increase incidences of unemployment among the Nigerian populace.

Creativity skills therefore, are highly needed by adolescents because creativity as knowledge economy can enable individuals, families, communities and even countries without any natural resources to grow faster than those with abundance of such resources. Relying only on natural resources to the neglect of creativity, a knowledge economy may, not guarantee survival in this current dynamic era. It therefore becomes

pertinent to study the factors that are militating against creativity development among secondary school adolescents, the roles of mothers and teachers to foster creativity among this group of people in Orumba-South Local Government Area of Anambra State. This is the main thrust of this paper.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to determine the roles of mothers and teachers in fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents. Specifically, the study determined the following:

1. Factors militating against creativity development among secondary school adolescents in Orumba-South Local Government Area.
2. The roles of mothers in fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents
3. The roles of teachers in fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents

Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the factors militating against creativity development among secondary school adolescents in Orumba-South Local Government Area?
2. What are the roles of mothers in encouraging creativity among secondary school adolescents?
3. What are the roles of teachers in encouraging creativity among secondary school adolescents?

Methodology

Design of the Study: The study employed a survey research design.

Area of the Study: The area of study was Orumba-South Local Government Area in Anambra-State. The Local Government Area is made up of 15 towns with headquarter at Umunze. It has a total population of 184,548 (Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, 2009). The indigenes are predominantly farmers.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consisted of the 550 working mothers of Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze (Research & Statistics unit, Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze, September, 2012) and 124 secondary school teachers in Orumba-South Local Government Area (Education Unit, Orumba-South Local Government Area, Anambra-State, September, 2012)

Sample and Sampling Technique: A sample of 200 out of the 550 mothers working at the Federal College of Education (Tech), Umunze was randomly selected and 65 out of the 124 secondary school teachers were randomly selected making the sample size a total of 226 respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument was divided into two main sections. Section A was structured to obtain personal data of the respondents. Section B was subdivided into A, B, C and sought information aimed at providing answers to the three research questions. A four point rating scale of "Strongly agreed", "Agreed",

“Disagree” and “Strongly disagree” was used.

The instrument was subjected to both content and face validation by two experts in Home Economics Education Department and one from Measurement and Evaluation Department of Federal College of Education (Tech), Umuze.

The instrument was pre-tested using 20 mothers and 15 teachers of secondary school in Orumba-South Local Government Area who are not part of the sample for the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability index was used to arrive at a coefficient value of 0.82 which showed a good reliability.

Data Collection and Analysis Technique: A total of 226 copies of questionnaire were administered with the help of a research assistant. The collection of all the copies was by hand. Data collected were analyzed using

mean. The researchers used 2.50 as the level of acceptance; that is any item with mean rating of 2.50 and above was regarded as accepted while any item with mean below 2.50 was regarded as rejected.

Findings of the Study: The following findings were made:

1. Ten factors militating against fostering of creativity among secondary school adolescents in Orumba-South Local Government Area (Table 1)
2. Eight roles of mothers in fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents (Table 2)
3. Eight roles of teachers in fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents (Table 3)

Table 1: Mean Rating of Respondents on the Factors Militating against Fostering of Creativity among Secondary School Adolescents in Orumba-South Local Government Area

S/N	Factors militating against fostering of creativity	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Teachers and mothers are not creative	3.14	Agreed
2	Lack of variety of instructional materials and technique of imparting the knowledge on students	2.81	Agreed
3	Not encouraging teacher's professional development in creativity	3.08	Agreed
4	Non engagement of knowledgeable resource persons to explain techniques of teaching creativity to secondary school teachers	3.06	Agreed
5	Teachers do not attend workshops and seminars	2.94	Agreed
6	Teachers are not ICT complaint to obtain information on creativity from internet	3.20	Agreed
7	Not allowing children to be unique and to express their individuality	2.78	Agreed
8	Unsafe and unfavourable creative environment	3.00	Agreed
9	Teachers do not foster originality among students in their academic work	3.20	Agreed

10	Inadequate provision of creative stimulating materials both at homes and at school	2.78	Agreed
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Table 1 above reveals that the entire items scored above the cut off point of 2.50. Therefore, the respondents agreed that the listed items were factors that militate against creativity among secondary school adolescents

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Role of Mothers in Fostering Creativity among Secondary School Adolescents

	Roles of Mothers in Fostering Creativity	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Provision of conducive learning environment at home and provision of materials needed	3.00	Agreed
2	Affording adolescents freedom to explore their environment	2.87	Agreed
3	Not being too authoritative and protective over adolescent	2.63	
4	Provision of right type of food that ensures healthy development	3.00	Agreed
5	Verbal encouragement and incentives for any new things or skills exhibited	3.20	Agreed
6	Avoiding sex-role stereotype among children	2.70	Agreed
7	Encouraging confidence and willingness to take risk	3.01	Agreed
8	Giving children challenging tasks that demand finding solutions by themselves	3.00	Agreed

Table 2 above reveals that all the respondents agreed to all the items listed. All the items had mean rating above 2.50. This implies that all the items are the roles of mothers in encouraging creativity among secondary school adolescents.

Table 3: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Role of Teachers in Encouraging Creativity among Secondary School Adolescent

S/N	Roles of teachers in fostering creativity	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Building motivation, especially internal motivation	2.78	Agreed
2	Embarking on excursions, projects and field trips with the adolescents	3.00	Agreed
3	Using varied teaching technique to foster creativity in adolescents	2.49	Agreed
4	Identifying and encouraging the acquisition of creativity skills among adolescent student in the course of teaching	3.20	Agreed
5	Advocating and encouraging originality by assisting adolescent to come up with new uses of object	2.70	Agreed
6	Stimulating and rewarding curiosity and exploration	2.60	Agreed
7	Helping the adolescents to redefine problems and think across subject through brain storming	3.67	Agreed
8	Display of good creative work done by others in the class	3.50	Agreed

Table 3 reveals that all the respondents agreed to all the items listed. All the items had mean ratings above 2.50; this implies that all the items are the roles of teachers in fostering creativity among secondary school adolescents.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows the mean responses of the respondents on factors militating against creativity among secondary school adolescents. The result indicates that parents and teachers agreed to all the items as factors responsible. All the items have mean scores of 2.50 and above. The findings reveal that most teachers in secondary schools are not creative, that there is lack of instructional materials being supplied both at home and at school and also inappropriate teaching techniques that will help stimulate creativity in these young people. Hence, when these entire ingredients for teaching and learning are lacking, adolescents on their own will not perform magic. This finding is in line with the findings of Ezenwanne (2007) and Anene-okeakwa (2002) who noted that many teachers are not creative, that they teach without instructional materials or laboratory facilities. Some of them teach mostly theoretical concepts and mostly adopt lecture method of teaching which stifle creativity among students. This has great implications on the creative ability of the students. One easily noticed that originality is not encouraged at all and this hinders these children being unique and inability to express their individualistic tendencies.

Table 2 shows the mean responses of respondents on the roles of mothers in encouraging creativity among secondary school adolescents. The result indicates that mothers have a lot of roles to play in enhancing creativity in the lives of their children. The implication then is that mothers should assist the adolescents in the development of their creative abilities by providing a very good conducive learning environment that take care of the materials needed for growth and development, provide them with right type of food that ensures healthy development.

Finally, table 3 looked at the roles of teachers in encouraging creativity among adolescents. The findings show that respondents agreed to all the items as the roles of teachers to foster creativity. The findings are in line with Uko-Aviomoh (2005), who noted that to teach creatively, teachers should use a variety of instructional materials and techniques, engage in series of research in order to be adequately equipped to deliver their lessons creatively and provide learners with opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. He went further to say that teachers should build motivation, especially internal motivation in their students for the creativity abilities to be sustained in their lives. Oloido (2000), remarked that the absence of creativity skills being sustained among adolescents and school leavers, is an impediment to sustainable development, which if not tackled would continue to incite and increase incidences of unemployment among the Nigerian populace.

Conclusion

Creativity is the major answer to solving human problems. In Nigeria, there are many adolescents endowed with creative abilities, but due to lack of encouragement from mothers at homes and teachers in the schools who are the main agencies of education, these talented young men and women are wasting away. Some are being used as maids only to hawk and generate income for the family, while some are used as tugs by politicians. If nothing is done to salvage this situation, these young people will just waste away. This poses a great challenge to individual families, government and the nation as a whole. Adolescents are the bedrock of any society and should be given adequate training at this stage of their lives and helped to develop creative abilities that promote and sustain knowledge economy.

Recommendations

1. Parents especially mothers should be up and doing in providing materials and encouraging creative activities among their adolescent children to increase their cognitive flexibility and idea generation skill.
2. Teachers, on their part should always feel free to collaborate with each other to share professional ideas and even engage resource persons to put them through in the areas they are not competent enough.
3. Government should send these secondary school teachers on training courses that relate to creativity and always organize

conferences and workshops for them.

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