Nurturing Creativity in Tourism Project – A Case in PTSS

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore the implementation of creative classroom or creative pedagogy in assisting the tourism students to produce a creative outcomes as part of their assessment in campus. The research is conducted in Tourism Management Unit of Tourism and Hospitality Department, Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin (PTSS). This study explores the implementation of creative pedagogy elements, namely creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning. The three elements are able to generate the creative qualities among students. The results show that, creative pedagogy has been implemented in the teaching and learning process. Students are given the opportunities to explore the resources and to express the new ideas in producing their creative outcome. However, students are restricted in demonstrating their autonomy and empowerment in the classroom. By nurturing creativity, students are believed to possess the creative qualities that are needed by 21st century industries and employers. Furthermore, the creative qualities enable the students’ ability to think and act creatively to generate for new ideas and hence, that will lead to enhancement of service especially for this case, the tourism service in Perlis.

Key words: creative pedagogy, creative teaching, teaching for creativity, creative learning.

INTRODUCTION

Most creativity researchers believe that creativity is teachable, learnable and improvable. (McWiliam, [1]; Murdock, [2]; Rhodes,[3]; Torrance,[4],[5]; Torrance & Torrance,[6] and most teachers are not aware of their own creativity in teaching or fostering creativity in students’ learning process. Normally, creativity is not the priority in teaching and learning process as, traditionally, the main focus in classroom is the completion of curriculum within the due dates. Creative and innovative thinking and behaviour need subtle time and due to this need, creativity is suppressed most of the time.

Inevitably, most teachers expect the outcomes from the teaching and learning process to be creative. The outcomes or assessments, normally come in many forms, namely written assignment, portfolio, essay, report and product or prototype. Assessments are fixed to evaluate student’s ability to execute their knowledge and skills in the form of examination scripts and various types of assignments. Furthermore, for latter type of assessments, creativity is secured as part of evaluation and it is included in the evaluation rubric.

In order for students to produce creative outcomes, teachers should foster the creative elements in teaching and learning process as to nurture the students to be creative and innovative. Theoretically, teachers could crack the creative potential or nurture the creative behavior [7] by inter relating these three components; teachers own creativity, instructional practices and the classroom climate. Nevertheless, most teachers are not aware that they are conducting creative teaching in classrooms. For the teachers, most of the time they only motivate the students to think and act creatively and innovatively to produce the required outcomes. And the conduct of these teachers is verified by Amabile & Hennessey [8] by stating that creativity arises through the confluence of knowledge, creative thinking and motivation.

Apart from the motivation as stated by Amabile, to nurture students’ creative thinking and acts, teachers need to develop creative classroom. According to a componental model of teacher’s classroom creativity, a creative classroom or creative pedagogy is the effort to enhance creativity development by interrelating 3 elements; teaching creatively, teaching for creativity and...
creative learning [9-10]. These component should be interrelated to crack creativity among students.

Traditionally, it is undeniable that creativity is highly needed in the field of creative media, performance and design. However, in the era of IR 4.0 and service transformations, hospitality and tourism industry too, are longed for the players to be creative and innovative to serve the digital and techno savvy community. Therefore, in ensuring the students are ready to serve these community, the teaching and learning process must be inclined toward creative and innovative thinking to produce the actual service that looks good in virtual arena. Furthermore, they would be able to escape from mass tourism to creative or experiential tourism which is in demand among the digital community tourists.

Generally, this study is to identify the existence of creative classroom or creative pedagogy elements implemented in developing and enhancing students’ creativity and creative behaviour while completing their final project. Furthermore, the study would also look into the teachers’ instructional practices in interrelating the creative classroom ambience that involves the physical, pedagogical and psychosocial features [11].

The Background of the Studies
In Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin (PTSS), Diploma in Tourism Management is one of the programmes offered. Students have to undergo in-campus learning process for 5 semesters (two and half years) and in the final semester, the students must complete their final project, called Tourism Project – DTM6024. To complete this course, students need to be creative in using all tourism resources to produce the project outcomes by undergoing the process outlined in the curriculum. The process is divided into several stages and assessments. The journey of completing the project in group, is supervised by nominated tourism lecturer.

For 2017, the theme for tourism project is – Developing the Edu-Tourism Package; Perlis Hidden Jewels by highlighting the unknown places or activities in Perlis that can be promoted as tourism products. There were 17 educational-tourism packages that have being developed and evaluated by selected panels from tourism industry players, representatives of Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tourism Malaysia. The best package scored 83% and average score for the group is 69% are selected based on the highest cumulative scores within a few criterion. The criteria outlined for the creative package and promotional material are; unique and authentic/ novel, saleable/ marketable, value for money, creative and well-timed. In addition, the results from the consumers’ cum tourists’ survey had also contributed to grade the packages.

In the process of developing the educational-tourism package, the students are assisted and monitored by the supervisors closely. Timely, it is believed that every supervisor has implemented different approaches in helping their students to complete the tasks; namely preparing the proposal, planning the learning activities on site, piloting the trip, developing the promotional materials, conducting the educational-package and producing and presenting the report. During the process, were the supervisors supporting or suppressing the students’ creative potential?

This conceptual paper will look into whether creative classroom or creative pedagogy features are being implemented to nurture the students’ creative potential while they undergone the process to produce the creative educational-tourism packages. As stated by Puccio, et al, people with the right skills, knowledge and personal traits, who work through an effective process in the environment that is conducive to creative thought, are more likely to produce creative products – tangible and intangible outcomes that are new and useful [12].

RATIONALE
The insight of this study is to discover the connection between, creativity in education and creative outcome, specifically for tourism students in PTSS. Previous studies had shown that to develop creativity through education can be done by collaborating teaching [13], environment [14] and teacher ethos [15].

This study aims to identify the instructional methods and practices applied in fostering the creative potential among tourism students who undertook the course of Tourism Project and to study whether the process in completing the project is conducted in the creative class ambience or comply with the elements of creative pedagogy.

In fulfilling the aim, the objectives of this research are as follow:
1. To identify which element of creative pedagogy is being employed during the completion of the project in terms of creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning.
2. To verify whether the creative classroom ambience is being implemented to nurture the students’ creative potential.
3. To check on the flexibility of the teachers’ behaviour towards the independence creative ideas or behaviours of the students. How do they encourage creativity among students

The outcome of the project that is the educational-tourism package should conform to the special features
agreed by panels such as; original creative activities conducted at a modest location, sellable/ marketable package or economic value package, experiential or educational based activities and obtained good reviews and feedbacks from clients. Apart from the activities, students should produce creative promotional materials and creative presentation of the projects. Therefore, in this concept study, the creative instructional methods and practices for tourism students completing their project will be looked upon.

CREATIVITY
Creativity is associated with the creative person [16], a process, a product or an environmental condition derived from the contribution of original ideas, a different point of view or a new way in looking into a problem [3;7]. Chatriand [18] defines individual creativity as something that occurs when an individual steps beyond traditional ways of doing, knowing and making [19]. Many researchers have adopted that, creativity is the potential for anyone to be able to think of new and useful ideas [20]; to look at a problem in a new way and find an original and workable solution and to think in a productive way to generate and apply ideas [21]; which lead to the production of creative outcome that is deemed to be novel or original and useful or adaptive [22].

Creativity is an essential part of organizational innovation, which, in turn, drives economic prosperity [23]. Thus from the above definitions, a person’s creativity would able to assure the organisation’s success by producing something novel, useful and adaptive as compared to the rivals; and in this case the rivals are the destinations that offer the same tourism constructs.

To be creative, a person needs to have adequate knowledge, relevant information [24], in-depth experience and long term focus in a specific area [25]. However, added that, to tap the creative potential, students should strike a balance between depth and breadth of knowledge by emphasising on multidisciplinary study and team up with members with different interest [26] whom engaged actively to provide creative output within adequate duration of time [27].

Creative Potential
Every human is creative and curious naturally. However the natural creativity will diminish unless it is nurtured by favourable environments [28]. Learners are encourage and motivate to create their own ecologies for self-determined, self-motivated and self-regulated learning to achieve something they wanted to achieve. These ecologies are created by using personal creative potential [29]. Therefore, it is believed that, self-determination and the push from environment will be able to sustain the creative potential in oneself.

Creative Outcome
Creative outcome is the emergence in action of a novel relational product growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances. While preparing or producing these products, the process will enable the learners to develop themselves personally and professionally [29]. The creative outcome is usually measured to ensure the originality or ability to solve a problem.

CREATIVE CLASSROOM
Creative classroom is to illustrate the relationships between creativity and pedagogical practices which interrelating the elements of creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning [9]. To carry out the creative pedagogy, there are teaching resources such as environment, people, products and processes need to be interconnected. (Richards [30] one of the peculiar resources in creative classroom is a person called teacher. Hence, all teachers should examine what is being taught, how it is being taught and how the development and growth or creativity should be woven into the educational fabric of teaching and learning [31]. By pooling the above resources, teachers are able to develop a supportive climate to nurture creative thinking and behaviour among students. The creative supportive climate or creative classroom is illustrated clearly in Figure 1.

To ensure the creative classroom ambience will enable to crack learners’ creative potential, creative pedagogy must be employed for teachers and learners. The achievements after employing the creative pedagogy are students creative abilities are improved and they would become a person with qualities that are able to use the teaching resources to find the best solution quickly [28] or to produce authentic and useful outcomes.
Creative Teaching
Creative teaching is defined as using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective [32]. Creative teaching focusses on teacher’s ethos, which is passion of using the instructional materials and environment as the resources to disseminate and nurture the skills for creativity. Teachers will employ the imagination, synergy and innovation to inspire students’ creativity or new ideas [33].

Teaching for creativity
Teaching for creativity is focussing in identifying young’s people creative abilities, encouraging and providing opportunities for the development of creative capacities [33]. This effort is to facilitate the students’ intervention and engagement toward creative skills and thinking. Teachers will use various strategies of learning, exploring for new possibilities, seeking for invention or arousing curiosity [34].

Creative Learning
Creativity can be learned and improved. Educators are able to create a creative environment and motivate student to learn creatively. Creative learning is about sensing problems, guessing the solutions, testing and retesting the solutions and communicating the results [7] by displaying the outcomes in terms of products, processes or conditions.

There are various methods in cultivating for creativity in classrooms, among the common is brainstorming [35]. Divergent and convergent thinking, using analogies and metaphors [36], problem and project based learning [37] are well known methods in promoting creative thinking.

METHODOLOGY
A survey was conducted using a four sectioned questionnaire to identify the instructional methods and practices implemented to complete the process in developing the creative outcome; namely educational-tourism packages that should be authentic/ original, novel and carry a commercial value. The items are measured by 5 points Likert-Scale to test the frequency of the creative pedagogy elements

The first section will crack the information on the personal details and teaching experiences. This section is to identify whether teaching experience will have an effect on nurturing creativity in classroom. The second section will look upon how the teachers are using different approaches to instil interest on a specific topic. In addition, this section also will identify the methods used to make the class lively and fun.

Teaching for creativity
The third section will focus on gathering the data on how teachers providing the opportunities and facilitate the students to express their creativity. Lastly, section 4 will identify how teachers develop the adequate environment for students to learn and identify their creative potential. This section also would look into what effort teachers put in to encourage the students to think and act creatively.

All questions are close-ended and it is developed to scrutinise the implementation of creative pedagogy. Respondents are the lecturers of Tourism Management Unit who are selected to be the supervisors for Tourism Project groups. There are 9 respondents who supervised 17 groups of students who undertook the course.

FINDINGS
The general finding has shown that all supervisors had used adequate creative pedagogy approaches that lead to nurturing students’ creativity in producing the creative outcome to complete DTM 6024 – Tourism Project. However, there is a sliding of scores in the element of creative teaching, where teachers seldom put the efforts to prepare suitable and interesting or fun resources for students to crack their creative potential.

As for teaching for creativity, the scores showed that teachers had given vast opportunities for students to getting and applying new ideas to complete the assigned tasks. In terms of carrying the teachers’ ethos, the result has shown that teachers frequently encourage and motivate the students to think and act creatively to prepare for the outcome for Tourism Project.

Relationship between Teaching Experience and Creative Pedagogy
Among the respondents, the teaching experience or years of teaching is almost equivalent. 6 respondents had 11 to 15 years of teaching experience, two of them had less than 5 years of teaching experience and 1 respondent is the senior among them, had less 17 years of teaching experience. However, according to Manuais [10], the profile of teachers, including, gender, subject taught, teaching experience and status showed a significant relationships among the componental factors in creative pedagogy. Additionally, Kinai [38] asserted in his studies that age is one of the factors that influence creativity. He claimed that creativity develops with age. However, Kinai [38] particularly found that there is no significant difference between age and creativity.

Creative Teaching
Creative teaching needs the teachers to use imaginative approaches and resources to make learning interesting and effective [33]. Teachers should be able to combine the techniques, tools, materials and methods for the teacher to be able to comply with creative teaching requirement. The scores showed the average
implementation of creative teaching features used during the supervision sessions. The results are shown in Table 1.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of Creative Teaching</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Employ imaginative approaches</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Use exciting and fun materials</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Show authentic/actual examples</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Share various substitute examples</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Encourage for new/fresh ideas</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Apply unique props</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Utilise resourceful aids</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Employ guided decision</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.0 Creative Teaching Features

The result showed that most Tourism Project supervisors prefer to share various substitute example in digging the creative potential among students. In contrast, the supervisors felt that applying unique props is not popular to nurture creativity. Through creative teaching, learners are encourage to be enthusiastic and using the exciting resources to think and act creatively [39].

Teaching for Creativity

Teaching for creativity is focussing on the implementation of pedagogical instructions in nurturing creativity in the classroom. In the case of Tourism Project, the supervisors are depending on resources and environment to encourage and provoke for creative behaviour. By preparing for the suitable resources, provoking curiosity, developing problems and employing idea gathering method such as brainstorming, supervisors are rating a supportive environment through effective strategies [40]. Table 2.0 show that, supervisors are depending on tourism resources as main element to encourage the Tourism Project group in producing the creative educational tourism package.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of Teaching for Creativity</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Urge thinking / behaviour toward the theme</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Encourage active thinking to produce list of ideas</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Develop problems/situations to be solved</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Employ idea gathering methods</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Encourage exploration of resources</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Provoke curiosity</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Boost imagination</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.0 : Teaching for Creativity Features

Creative Learning

Table 3.0 shows that, the supervisors are providing a platform for Tourism Project group members to express their ideas. However, from the results, there hindrances for the students to utilise their autonomy, empowerment and playful activities. According to Lin [40], the features of creative learning is a salient feature in the framework of creative pedagogy for learners. Since, it focusses on learners’ independent development. In contrast, Torrance [41] argued that, by giving the learners the authority, they seem to adhere to ordinary thinking style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of Creative Learning</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Focus on fun and playful activities/spaces</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Employ caring attitude, able to change role</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Encourage autonomy of ideas</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Encourage decision making using collective/collaborative decision</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Develop confidence in expressing ideas</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Boost the spirit of empowerment</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Provide the freedom to take risk</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.0 : Creative Learning

The results had shown that, supervisors are giving less opportunity for the students to demonstrate their empowerment and autonomy.

The Implementation of Creative Pedagogy for DTM 6024 – Tourism Project

The findings showed that the features of creative pedagogy had been employed by all supervisors during the supervision sessions. By employing this creative instructional methods, it is proven that the findings attained with the students average score for their Tourism Project that is 76%. For creative teaching, the frequency of the features being implemented is 73.6%. Additionally, 85.7% of time was used for teaching creatively. Lastly, for creative learning, 78% of time was spent to assist the students to be a creative learners.

CONCLUSION

As for the conclusion, the concept of creative pedagogy is still new in the education system in Malaysia Polytechnic. Lecturers are expecting the outcomes to be assessed are in the creative quality. However there is no requirement for lecturers to record the implementation of creative pedagogy. This concept paper is a boost to further a study on creative pedagogy in order to prepare the students for to become employable or self-employed when they have the creative qualities.
Creative teaching, teaching for creativity and creative learning features should be researched thoroughly in developing a guideline for Polytechnics’ lecturer to carry out the creative pedagogy and creative assessment.

The finding shows that the students considered the lessons useful in developing certain creative qualities, such as imagination, independent thinking, and risk-taking. The participants also identified characteristics and strategies used in the lessons that made the development possible, such as innovation, playfulness, task-oriented, collaborative learning, and the teacher’s guidance.

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