The International Journal of Indian Psychology
ISSN 2348-5396 (Online) | ISSN: 2349-3429 (Print)
Volume 14, Issue 1, January- March, 2026
DIP: 18.01.079.20261401, DOI: 10.25215/1401.079
https://www.ijip.in

Research Paper

Think Beyond the Box: A Journey into Student Creativity Development

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ABSTRACT

Creativity is one of the most important skills in the fast-changing of the 21st century that plays a crucial role in the all-around development of students. The conventional education system, based on rote and teacher-centred learning, is constantly challenged by the need to foster imagination, innovation, critical thinking, and Creativity. The young students of today will have to tackle problems like global warming, resource depletion and unplanned urbanisation tomorrow. Creative education empowers learners to become not only knowledgeable but also adaptable, resilient, and capable of better handling these crises to shape a better world. Creativity is not restricted to art and literature; it is recognised as an important ability in all areas of education, as well as numerous life skills such as problem solving, decision making, critical thinking. This paper discusses the teaching methods and techniques required for inculcating Creativity among students. The paper explains effective methods and techniques, such as Brainstorming, mind mapping, problem-based learning (PBL), Role Play and Simulation inquiry-based learning, Experiential Learning, Project-Based Learning, and SCAMPER, which enhance cognitive and creative skills. Additionally, the paper analyses major barriers to Creativity—such as rigid curricula, fear of failure, and lack of teacher training. This journey, outside the box, is not only a technique for individual student development, but also an imperative evolution of the school system in order to equip students for an uncertain, dynamic, and complex world.

Keywords: *Creativity, mind mapping, Brainstorming, problem-based learning, SCAMPER, Experiential Learning*

Creativity has been considered a significant skill for students in the 21st century, and it is seen as a key to effective learning in education and beyond (Jahnke, Haertel, & Wildt, 2015). The concept of Creativity is Vague in itself, and familiar at the same time as there is no particular definition of Creativity. In the words of Andriopoulos (2000) the concept of Creativity is ambiguous and elusive, making it challenging to define because there isn't a universally recognised definition. In today's world, Creativity is seen as a multidimensional skill, that fosters innovation, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities that are crucial in an uncertain and complex world. Inculcating Creativity in students is no

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Received: September 09, 2025; Revision Received: February 21, 2026; Accepted: February 25, 2026

longer a privilege, but an educational necessity. It was described as 'the cultural capital of the twenty-first century' by Sheridan-Rabideau (2010).

Livingston (2010) describes Creativity as an important life skill across a person's life-span. He also stated that Creativity has a direct connection to the development of content knowledge and skills within a culture increasingly shaped by investigation, cooperation, connection, integration and synthesis. Based on some evidence, it is also suggested that Creativity is a key element of daily teaching practice, especially when the goal of learning is to generate novel ideas, find ways of exploring problems, handle complex situations, and combine ideas and things in innovative ways. (Jackson & Shaw, 2005).

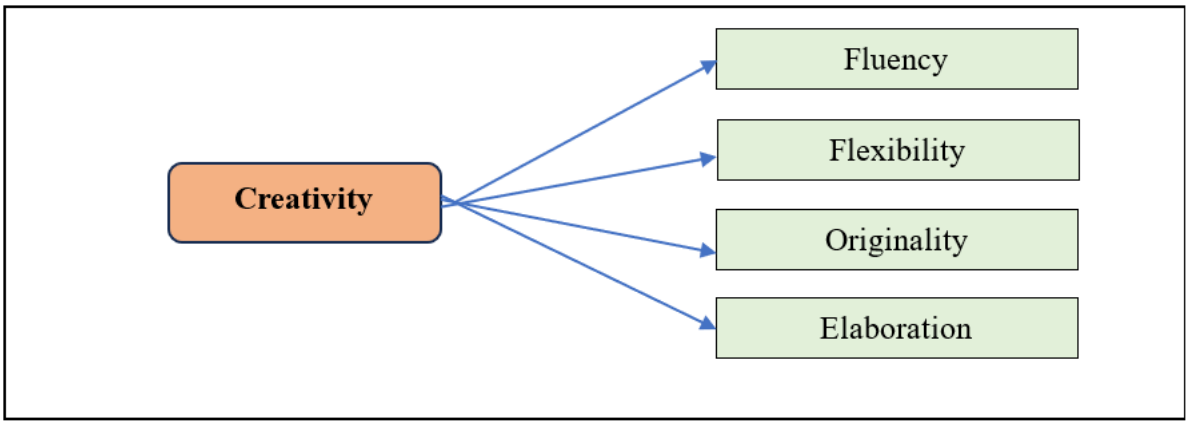
This paper delves into how Creativity can be inculcated in students using different methods and techniques. It emphasises the need to move "beyond the box", towards a dynamic, student-centred learning environment.

Understanding Creativity

Creativity is a multidimensional skill that has always been the centre of attraction for psychologists, educators, and researchers for decades. As stated by Runco (2012) there are two criteria required to define Creativity: Originality and Effectiveness. Originality is essential, as it is often called as novel or unique, if something is not unique/novel, it is just common and cannot be called as creative. For an idea, to be called as creative, must be original and effective too. An idea that is unique as well as effective, take the form of value (Runco and Jaeger, 2012).

According to E. Paul Torrance (1962), the father of Creativity, Creativity is the process of sensing problems or gaps in information, then identifying the difficulties and seeking solutions through trial and error or through forming hypotheses. On the basis of Guilford's work, Torrance developed the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) in 1966, which is still the most widely used tool to assess Creativity, especially in the context of Education and Psychology.

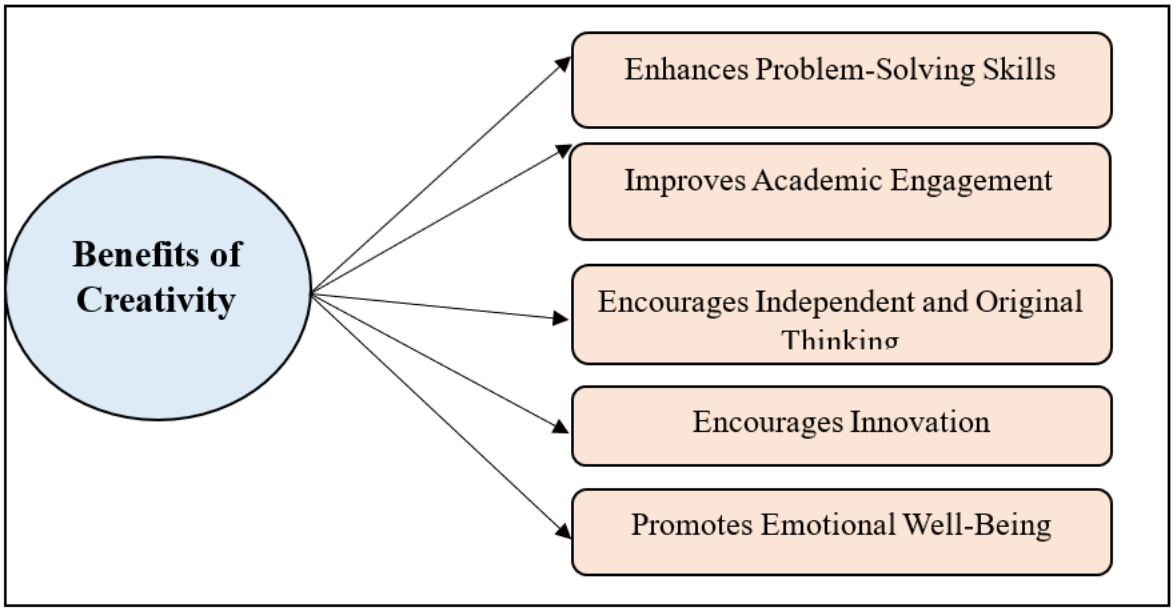
In TTCT, Torrance gave four types of Creativity:



1. **Fluency-** Ability to produce a large number of ideas frequently.
2. **Flexibility-** Ability to produce a variety of ideas/ to think in different ways.
3. **Originality-** Ability to produce unique and novel ideas.
4. **Elaboration-** Ability to give details of ideas.

Benefits of Creativity for Students

Below are given the benefits of Creativity for students:



Enhances Problem Solving Skills – Creativity enhances the way of thinking and solve the problem; it promotes different ways of thinking rather than a certain one. Creativity also promotes critical thinking of the students; they analyse the whole situation and synthesis the best solution.

Improves Academic Engagement – In the creative classroom, the student engages with the activities, they actively participated in learning process. Students' academic engagement is enhanced through creative teaching approaches such as project-based learning, activity-based learning, art integration and storytelling method.

Encourage Independent and Original Thinking- Creativity boosts the self-confidence of the learners; they freely express their creative thoughts and it promotes active knowledge construction or practical knowledge in place of bookish knowledge.

Encourages innovation -Creativity promotes innovation, it encourages for the new and innovative teaching method (Approaches). Creativity develops the innovative mindset of the student, they think critically, generate ideas, and focus on problem-solving.

Promotes Emotional Well Being- creative activities or teaching methods like Art integrated learning, project-based learning, gamification, and storytelling methods promote the Emotional well-being of the students. During these activities they freely express their feelings, and enhance their emotional wellbeing. Creativity stimulated happiness, curiosity and excitement of the students and these emotions enhance their mental and emotional health.

Methods and Techniques to Foster Creativity

Fostering Creativity in learners needs intentional strategies that go beyond rote memorisation and promote exploration, innovation, and critical thinking.

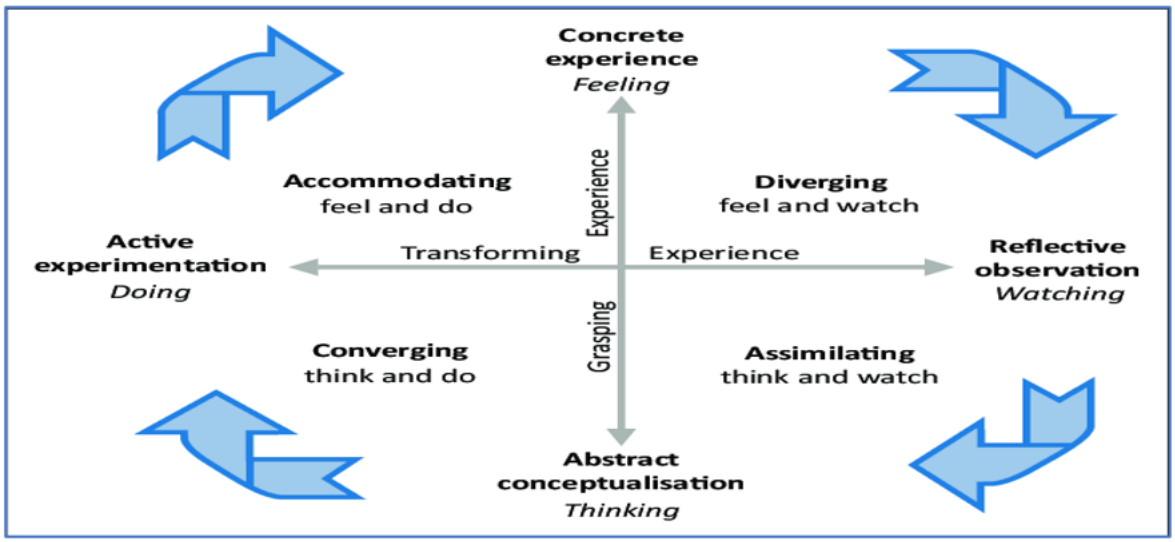
Methods for Fostering Creativity in Students

The following are the **methods** that have been proven effective in fostering Creativity in students in educational settings:

1. **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING METHOD**

Experiential learning is a learner-centred approach where students engage in hands-on, real-world experiences, followed by reflection, analysis, and application. According to Wilson (2002), experience may strengthen all learning, but learning can or cannot always be the outcome. Here individuals have to be involved and reflect on what happened, how it happened, and why. Therefore, experiential learning can be stated as the route of getting knowledge through the conversion (conversion here means, transforming or changing experience into knowledge of experience (Ayob et al., 2011)

David Kolb gave an Experiential Learning Cycle in 1984, which includes four stages of Experiential learning is given below:



Source: Horst and Albertyn (2018)

Examples of some Experiential Learning methods are: Field trips, Simulations, Case Studies, Experiments, community engagement, Internship etc.

Benefits of Experiential Learning for Students

In experiential leaning, students participate actively that increase their engagement in the learning process, it encourages deep learning, built critical thinking, boosts Creativity and innovation. Experiential learning also enhances the various aspects or domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) of the learner and increases active participation in classroom activities. Experiential learning is the best approach for 21st-century learning because the 21st century is the century of learner-centered education where teachers play a secondary role in the whole educational process (Singh and Rao, 2024).

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING METHOD (PBL)

Project-Based Learning method is a student-centred method that organise learning around a project that enable students to gain knowledge and skills by actively engaging in real-world. Instead on focusing on just textbook knowledge, PBL allows student to solve problems, and construct knowledge through hands-on experiences.

There are four stages of Project-Based Learning implementation given by Simson (2011):

1. **Starting the project**
   In this stage, the teacher introduces the project to the students or students may themselves select for a project. The teacher guides and encourages to develop the project.
2. **Developing the project**
   In this stage, students create a project either in the group or individually;here teacher helps students with the sources of the project.
3. **Reporting to the peers**
   After completion of the project, it is presented before the class and feedback is taken.
4. **Assessing the project**
   In the last stage, student present their project orally after which other students and the teacher may ask questions. The final assessment is done by the teacher after the presentation.

Benefits of Project-Based Learning for Students

Project-based learning develops various 21st century skills that are mentioned in NPE 2020, i.e., communication, collaboration, Creativity, and critical thinking. It also improves rention power of students by enhancing deep understanding of topic. As a result of PBL students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, Creativity, and communication skills (Bytyqi, 2021).

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING METHOD

The inquiry method is an active learning method, that focuses on interrogation, exploration and problem solving by the students themselves. This method emphasises knowledge related to "how" and not "about," which means how knowledge is acquired and not about knowledge (Shanmugavel, et. al, 2020)

Table 1. Summary of the BSCS 5E Instructional Model

Phase	Summary
Engagement	The teacher or a curriculum task assesses the learners' prior knowledge and helps them become engaged in a new concept through the use of short activities that promote curiosity and elicit prior knowledge. The activity should make connections between past and present learning experiences, expose prior conceptions, and organize students' thinking toward the learning outcomes of current activities.
Exploration	Exploration experiences provide students with a common base of activities within which current concepts (i.e., misconceptions), processes, and skills are identified and conceptual change is facilitated. Learners may complete lab activities that help them use prior knowledge to generate new ideas, explore questions and possibilities, and design and conduct a preliminary investigation.
Explanation	The explanation phase focuses students' attention on a particular aspect of their engagement and exploration experiences and provides opportunities to demonstrate their conceptual understanding, process skills, or behaviors. This phase also provides opportunities for teachers to directly introduce a concept, process, or skill. Learners explain their understanding of the concept. An explanation from the teacher or the curriculum may guide them toward a deeper understanding, which is a critical part of this phase.
Elaboration	Teachers challenge and extend students' conceptual understanding and skills. Through new experiences, the students develop deeper and broader understanding, more information, and adequate skills. Students apply their understanding of the concept by conducting additional activities.
Evaluation	The evaluation phase encourages students to assess their understanding and abilities and provides opportunities for teachers to evaluate student progress toward achieving the educational objectives.

Source: Bybee (2006)

The 5 E method also fits under the Constructivist Approach to teaching, which is highly recommended in most currently followed policy documents.

Benefits of Inquiry-Based learning for students

IBL is a significant teaching-learning process as it makes learning more meaningful as students connect new information to prior knowledge. It helps in enhancing self-directed learning, curiosity, critical and creative thinking, communication skills, collaboration, and teamwork, making a learner an active and deep learner.

TECHNIQUES FOR CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT

The following are the pedagogical techniques, which are effective in fostering Creativity in students in educational settings:

ROLE PLAY METHOD CUM TECHNIQUE

Role play is a creative tool for boosting Creativity in students. It provides an experiential learning environment where students can think beyond the box and explore multiple

methods of solving problems and facing real-life problems. It helps in enhancing Creativity by using imagination, divergent thinking, expressing thoughts, etc.

Stages of Role-Play as given by Bateson & Martin (2013):

1. Define the goal of the Game
2. Developing Scenario with detailed description
3. Preparing necessary materials
4. Conducting the Game with active moderation
5. Analysing the Outcomes

Benefit of Role-play for students

Role-play helps in improving various skills of students like, expression, critical thinking, Creativity, social behaviour, problem solving, communication and decision making. It boosts imagination, self-confidence, promotes empathy and emotional intelligence.

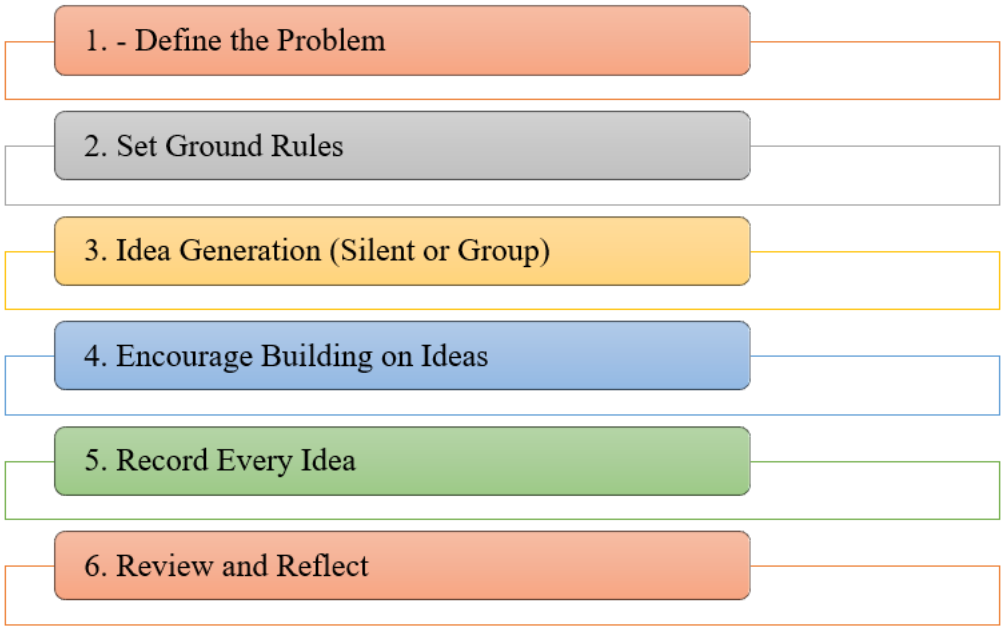
BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUE

Alex F. Osborn introduced the concept of Brainstorming in 1940s. His main aim was to improve Creativity by encouraging people to generate new ideas without any criticism and judgement.

Key principles of Brainstorming given by Osborn: -

1. Defer Judgment
2. Quantity Over Quality
3. Encourage out-of-the-box thinking
4. Build on the Ideas of Others

Process of Brainstorming



Benefits of Brainstorming in Education

It helps in encouraging idea sharing and critical & divergent thinking, promotes collaborative learning among the students at the same time builds confidence and communication skills.

MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE

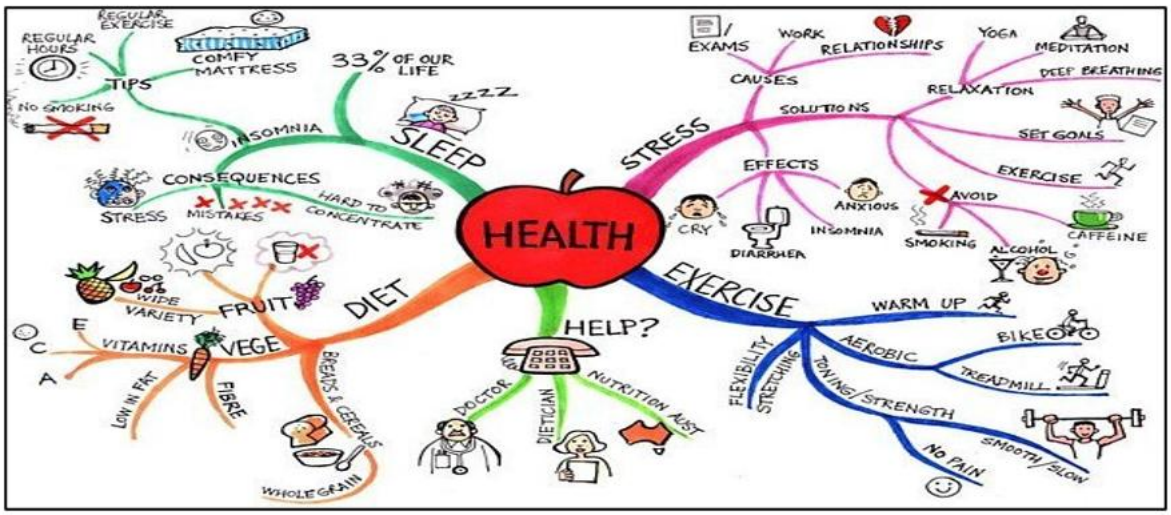
A Mind Map is a form of visual diagrams that help to organise information on any topic, using the branches which represent topics, subtopics and more details about that topic. It helps in encouraging Creativity, and problem-solving.

Tony Buzan gave the concept of the Mind Mapping technique in the 1970s. He believed that mind mapping helps to activate both sides of the brain, that allows broad thinking.

Features of Mind Mapping

1. **Main Idea/Central Idea:** It is placed in the centre of the mind map
2. **Branches:** Branches are extended from the central ideas like branches of tress.
3. **Keywords:** These are the short notes or phrases written on branches
4. **Images and Colours:** Mind maps use images and colours to write phrases, and icons/symbols to encourage engagement and attention**.**
5. **Hierarchy and Connections:** Branches and subbranches show the detailed description of the main idea in hierarchical order.

Here is a Sample of a Mind Map:



Source: mindmapart.com

Benefits of Mind Mapping for students

It helps in fostering Creativity by the free flow of ideas, and visual connection in mind maps helps in improving the memory and retention power of students. It also enables students to understand the complex topic by breaking it into manageable parts. As a mind map uses colours and images, it helps to increase students' engagement in learning.

SCAMPER TECHNIQUE

SCAMPER is an acronym for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other use, Eliminate and Reverse. It was developed on the idea of Brainstorming, which was formalised by Bob Eberle in 1971. According to Eberle (1971) SCAMPER technique motivates students to generate new ideas by changing and manipulating existing ideas. SCAMPER technique encourages students to investigate, generate multiple ideas, solve problems, brainstorm, and apply their knowledge through the abilities of creative thinking and their self-learning skills (Hamid et al., 2019). As per an argument by Radziszewski (2017), students usually face difficulties in generating multiple ideas in school settings.

Perhaps because students may heavily rely on teachers (Pratiwi et al., 2019) or students are unable to create various thoughts or using creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Application SCAMPER in Education Based on Eberle's SCAMPER model (1971)

SCAMPER Step	**Questions**	**Application in teaching**
S- Substitute	What can be substituted in the classroom teaching?	Substitute textbooks with interactive e-books or digital content.
C- Combine	What can be combined with current teaching practices?	Combine face-to-face teaching with virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality
A – Adapt	What can be adapted from other fields or settings?	Adapt gamification techniques used in mobile apps.
M - Modify	What can be modified, magnified, or minified?	Promote peer collaboration and reduce teacher talk time
P- Put to Another Use	Can teaching methods be used differently?	Use storytelling or role play to teach ethical decision-making.
E- Eliminate	What unnecessary parts can be removed?	Reduce excessive homework to allow time for reflection.
R- Reverse	Can roles, sequences, or formats be reversed?	Flip the classroom—students study theory at home and practice in class

Benefits of SCAMPER for Students

SCAMPER technique enables students to think beyond their capacity, enhance problem-solving abilities, critical thinking and Creativity, as it encourages active participation of student in learning process it promotes collaboration and discussion and foster higher-order thinking skills.

BARRIERS TO CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION

Here are some barriers to Creativity in education:

1. **Institutional Barriers:** Educational institutes are engaged in rote learning and examination performance, and schools are overburdened by the prescribed syllabus with a limited time period to complete it that reduce the scope for adopting creative teaching methods in the classrooms.
2. **Teacher-Related Barriers:** Teachers are not given proper training in fostering Creativity, and some teachers consider creative activities as chaotic and distracting during teaching. Teachers usually avoid creative methods in fear of lowering the scores of students in examinations.
3. **Student-Related Barriers:** The Education system has conditioned students to seek the correct solution rather than exploring alternative possibilities. Students tend to feel nervous while expressing their novel ideas due to the fear of being wrong.
4. **Cultural and Social Barriers:** Lack of resources like prompts, technology, books, teaching learning material, also act as a barrier. Multilingual or marginalised students may struggle to express creative ideas freely due to lack of ample opportunities.
5. **Assessment Barriers:** This barrier resembles the institutional and teacher-related barrier as most education system/ teacher does not involve creative tasks in assignments, as creative work is hard to grade objectively, leading to inconsistent evaluation.

6. **Emotional and Psychological Barriers:** This is the major barrier for students, as high academic pressure and expectations of parents for higher grade kills the curiosity and imagination of students.

OVERCOME BARRIERS TO CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION

1. **Facilitate pedagogical training for teachers**: Facilitate an internship, induction and training programme for teachers in creative pedagogy and creative instructional strategies—such as design thinking, divergent thinking exercises, and cross-disciplinary projects—can empower teachers to facilitate Creativity more effectively (Beghetto, 2010).
2. **Integrate a flexible curriculum in the schools:** The school should integrate a flexible curriculum, to give opportunity to students to make connections between subjects and apply knowledge to real-world challenges.
3. **Promote Collaborative and Cooperative Learning:** Collaborative and cooperative learning should be encouraged in the classroom to foster teamwork, communication, and the exchange of diverse ideas.
4. **Emphasise Inquiry- and Project-Based Learning:** Replace rote memorisation with inquiry-based, project-based, and experiential learning, which can create an environment that values original thinking (Bullard & Bahar, 2023).
5. **Normalise Failure and Create a Safe Learning Environment:** Teachers should normalise failure and mistakes as a part of learning process and try to make classroom psychologically safe and reinforce that creative failure leads to growth.

CONCLUSION

In today's changing scenario of the 21st century, Creativity is most essential skill for students to grow in life. It enables students to think critically, face real-life challenges and solve problems with innovation. Despite being a complex and multidimensional skill, Creativity can be nurtured through intentional pedagogical strategies like experiential learning, project-based learning, inquiry methods, and creative techniques such as Brainstorming, role-play, SCAMPER, and mind mapping. Fostering Creativity is required to overcome the barriers within the educational system like rigid curricula, traditional assessment practices, lack of teacher training, and psychological fear of failure.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Sisodia, S., Kharbanda, J. & Satsangee, N. (2026). Think Beyond the Box: A Journey into Student Creativity Development. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *14*(1)*,* 834-844. DIP:18.01.079.20261401, DOI:10.25215/1401.079