CREATIVE METHODS PRACTICING TECHER TRAINEES EMPLOY IN TEACHING

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine creative methods practicing teacher trainees employ in teaching. This is an exploratory qualitative study of 20 in-service teacher trainees undertaking a Postgraduate (PG) Master in Education programme at the University of Dodoma, Tanzania aimed at designing a conceptual paradigm for creative pedagogy within the context of study. The phenomenographic method was used in the collection and analysis of data by identifying categories of description pertaining to the understanding and experiences of the phenomenon of creative pedagogy by participants. The study revealed that creative pedagogical methods and strategies cut across subject domains and levels of the school system. It is recommended that the training and practice of creative pedagogy would be anchored on a socio-cultural ethos of creativity.

Keywords: creativity, methods, teacher, practicing teacher trainee, teaching

Introduction

During the last two decades, there have been rapid changes in the way we learn and work around the world now approach a fourth industrial revolution' characterised by unprecedented technological advancements in artificial intelligence, machine learning, nanotechnology, and telecommunication systems, among others (Harari, 2016). While the onslaught of technological advancements presents opportunities for leapfrogging development in many parts of the world, these equally lead to escalating problems of youth unemployment around the world, mainly due to lack of skills for even available and viable jobs. For instance, it was estimated that by the end 2022, there will be 95 million jobs around the world, a lot of which will not be filled because such jobs require well-trained and creative labour force, which is increasingly lacking due to the

disconnect between educational systems and the changing reality of work (Robinson and Aromica, 2018).

Because of the need to bridge the global skills gap (Olson, 2015) and to thrive in the context of the fast-paced changes, creative thinking has been recognised as the crucial skill required of the job force going into the future (WEF, 2016). The concept of creativity in teaching and learning has now become very crucial, having generated a lot of studies over the last sixty years and increasingly so during the past two decades (Tanggaard, 2014).

According to humanistic scholars such as Maslow and Hoffman (1996), May (1980) and Rogers (1954), creativity is a natural inclination of individuals to develop and express their capabilities.

Creativity is thus a potential which abides in all human beings and should no longer be perceived as preserve and luxury of some gifted individuals (Boden, 2010); rather, creativity is a fundamental and distinguishing feature of the human condition. Consequently, like literacy and numeracy skills, creativity is a crucial skill and an expected outcome of education for everyone in the 21st-century globalised world. Creativity should be taught and cultivated in our school systems to help develop the self-esteem and confidence of students (WEF, 2016). It is imperative to have teachers who are trained to be creative to teach in a manner that would encourage the creative thinking abilities of students (Piirto, 2011).

Undoubtedly, creativity is inexplicable to the human condition as every child is born as a bundle of creative potential with an unfathomable capacity to learn like the brain, a marvellous and powerful learning machine in the universe, continually forms millions of neural connections (Robinson and Aromica, 2018). However, this natural creative tendency gets either stifled or enhanced as the child grows from the crib to the classroom. Thus, the development of creativity largely depends on environment and context and by implication varies from culture to culture (Csikszentmihalyi, 2012)

Consequently, in different parts of the world, creative education has become instrumental to the development of the potentials of individuals as well as the wellbeing of nations. For instance, at the turn of the 21st century, the British government set up the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) a body of experts which produced *All Our Futures (1999)* report, as a strategic document for developing creativity through education and culture. The educational success stories of countries such as Finland, Singapore, Korea and more recently, Estonia, have all been anchored on creative pedagogies and the need to prepare futureready human resources (Leen, Hong, Kwan and Ying, 2014)).

In the *Future of Jobs* Report (WEF, 2016), a compelling case is made for the urgency of a radical shift in educational practices around the world towards learner-centred pedagogies aimed at igniting the creative potential of children to enable them to become competent in solving problems and making decisions. For, as stated by Tambychik and Meerah (2012), it is essential to implement creative strategies in the classroom as a sure means of nurturing independent-minded and competent global citizens.

Recognising present trends and potentials of Africa's youthful population, the fact that the future holds supreme opportunities for the African continent and how education and work will drive development for generations to come, Africa Union's Agenda 2063 strategic plan, among other things states categorically that, ―Young African men and women will be the pathbreakers of the African knowledge society and will contribute significantly to innovation and entrepreneurship. The creativity, energy and innovation of Africa's youth shall be the driving force behind the continent's political, social, cultural and economic transformation‖ (Africa Union Commission, 2015, p. 9). It is in light of the quest for a total transformation of the African continent that Agbowuro, Saidu and Jimwan (2017) and Amponsah, Amoak and Ampadu (2019) have argued for countries in Africa to develop and implement educational policies which promote creative

teaching and learning. Doing this would unleash the seething creative capacities of young Africans towards the technological, entrepreneurial, economic and sociocultural advancements that we earnestly seek and urgently require, especially considering the levels of abject poverty amid plenty and the high rates of unemployment.

Presently, Dodoma, like many other African countries, has to grapple with 12 percent youth unemployment and over 50 percent underemployment (Dadzie, Fumey and Namara, 2020) which are sources of threat to its survival as a nation. Amoak (2009) describes the situation with a metaphor of question marks for children who begin school with a lot of curiosity and a quest to learn to how the educational system stifles them into dogmatic adults, characterised by the metaphor of full stop. The uniformity of thinking fostered over the decades through formal education is no doubt a remnant of a colonial legacy of education which sought to train unquestioning civil and public officers serving the interest of the colonial system.

Many products from institutions of high learning have been considered halfbaked as they lack critical and creative thinking skills (National Education Assessment Report, 2016). However, the educational system is a reflection of a cultural system which to a large extent does not encourage children to be critical and questioning (children are supposed to be seen not heard) and are expected to have unquestioning attitudes and readily acquiescence to the decisions and authority of parents, elders, teachers and leaders. Thus, we end up churning out young people who are mis-educated, fearful to try new things and lack authenticity of who they are because they are self-alienated and conditioned to follow the beaten tracks and trodden paths of conformism. According to Nyarko et al. (2013), the inability of the educational system to develop original and innovative thinkers is mainly due to the absence of creative teachers who foster and inspire creative thinkers.

Given the inadequacies of the current education system in the face of the exigencies of the 21st century characterised by constant and fast-paced changes, the Education Service (ES), recognised the need for a new paradigm and through the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) spearheaded the redesign of the curriculum for elementary schools to be implemented from the 2019/2020 academic year. The new curriculum is characterised by 4Rs, namely: wRiting, Reading, aRithmetic and cReativity. Expected core competencies of the new curriculum include; critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and innovation. The notable underpinning unique pedagogical approaches of the new curriculum include; social constructivism, learner-centred classrooms, teacher-centred school and the use of ICT as tool for teaching and learning. A curriculum of such nature is the first in the series of steps and when well implemented should develop the creative potential of young people. One can then therefore anticipate that the pursuit of creative pedagogy would be a means of not only decolonising the educational system, but also radically transforming and liberating imaginative and mental faculties of young people towards being relevant, self-reliant and solving the problems of their communities.

The classroom and the school environment should inspire and nurture creative and futureready human resources. And no one should be in a better position to navigate this nurturing than the teacher. Thus, Grifiths (2014) makes an urgent call for the adoption of a creative, imaginative and open approach to teacher education. There is an imperative to train teachers to be creative, for instance, through exposure to game-based learning and gamification which, as noted by Cozar-Gutierrez & Saez-Lopez (2016) enhance innovative teaching and learning.

The concept and awareness of creative pedagogy is relatively a new phenomenon in the context of the study. Although teachers are required by the new curriculum to develop the creative

potential of children, teachers are not adequately aware and designed to foster creative teaching and learning (Amponsah et al., 2019).

Despite the need for creative thinking as an essential survival skill in the 21st century and the introduction of a new curriculum at the elementary level in schools with emphasis on creativity and problem solving, there is no comprehensive study on creative pedagogy and how teacher education can and should foster creative thinking and problem solving skills among students towards self-reliance. So far, there have been studies such as those conducted by Amponsah et al. (2019) and Nyarko et al. (2013) in terms of general inhibitions to creativity, perceptions of school pupils as well as teachers' promotion of creativity. The main gap in these studies is that they do not delve into the role of teacher education programmes in preparing teachers to view their practice as creative. There is, therefore the need for more and further research on creativity and education, especially delving into creative pedagogy and the importance of teacher education programmes. This study focuses on how teacher trainees could be developed to become creative teachers and by so doing, contribute to the literature in this emerging area of study which undoubtedly is crucial and essential for current and future educational programming and policy.

In terms of theory, this study utilises Lin's (2009) creative pedagogy framework which hinges on three key components, namely; *Teaching for Creativity*, *Creative Teaching* and *Creative Learning*. There is however a theoretical gap about the context of study in the sense that Lin's (2009) widely accepted framework is inadequate in addressing the peculiarity of the need for deliberate training and development of pre-service and in-service teachers in creative pedagogy. But as it was proposed by Lin (2011), there is the need for further context-specific studies on creative pedagogy about the role of teachers, ways of learning and how teacher education can enable teachers to nurture their creativity and the creativity of school children. Consequently, the

study seeks to identify creative methods and strategies relevant for the promotion of creative pedagogy within the context of the study.

Based on an initial baseline study of teacher trainees at the Teachers training tertiary institutions, there is the need to explore and develop a model suitable for the context of the study of how teacher trainees at the tertiary institutions can adequately utilise creative pedagogy as a foundational method of teaching and learning in the 21st century.

Research Questions

Which creative methods and strategies do practicing teacher trainees employ in teaching that they did not use or know of before enrolling on the Education course?

What ways do the creative methods of teaching used by practicing teacher trainees affect teaching and learning?

Method

This is a qualitative study using phenomenography, an empirical research approach to educational research for describing, through interpretation, the varying ways that people experience a phenomenon. The process of phenomenographic research as undertaken and applied in this study is demonstrated through the following flowchart:
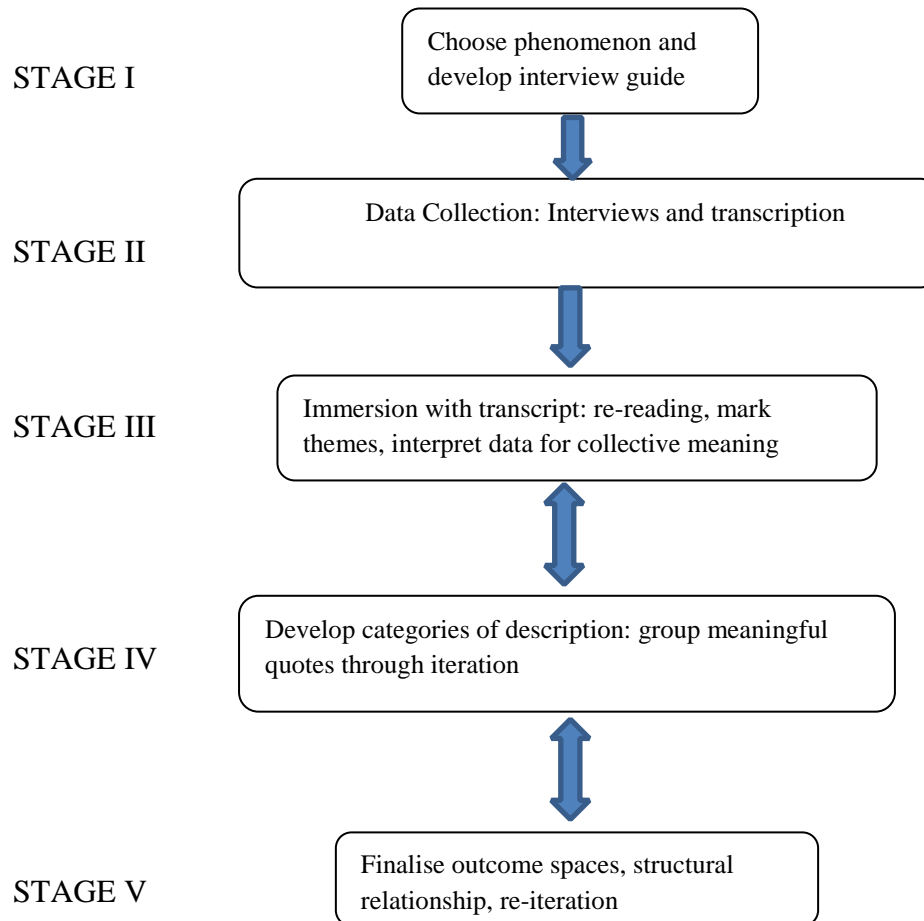
STAGE I	Choose phenomenon and develop interview guide
STAGE II	Data Collection: Interviews and transcription
STAGE III	Immersion with transcript: re-reading, mark themes, interpret data for collective meaning
STAGE IV	Develop categories of description: group meaningful quotes through iteration
STAGE V	Finalise outcome spaces, structural relationship, re-iteration

Figure 1: Phenomenographic research process pertaining to the study

The population of the study was the 2020/2021 cohort of 38 teacher trainees undergoing a postgraduate Master degree in Education course in the University of Dodoma, Tanzania. Some of these are practicing teacher trainees, and others are now training to enable them to enter into the teaching profession. The sample size was 20 practicing teacher trainees undergoing the postgraduate Masters degree in Education. These teachers were sampled through purposive random sampling to determine and maximise the variations and experiences of meaning and ways of teaching by participant practicing trainees before and after their exposure to creative pedagogical methods. The main instrument for data collection was an interview guide which

consisted of openended, semi-structured questions was developed. To ensure the validity of the instrument, this guide was subsequently fine-tuned following feedback obtained from two piloted interviews. A total of twenty practicing teacher trainees were interviewed on one-onone basis within a period two months. All interviews were conducted in English and recorded with an audio-recording device. The duration for the interviews ranged from a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of one hour, with the majority being around 40 minutes. Each interview was then transcribed leading to transcripts that ranged between five and ten pages long. In analyzing the data, thematic analysis was used.

Analysis and Results

Research Question 1

Which creative methods and strategies do practicing teacher trainees employ in teaching that they did not use or know of before enrolling on the Education course?

Teaching creatively and for creativity requires the use of instructional methods and strategies which are among other things child-centred, constructivist, co-operative, problem-based and participatory (Sahlberg, 2009). The fundamental and overarching strategy adopted by trainees, following their exposure to creative pedagogical methods at the initial stages of their training is differentiated learning, that is, varying instruction and processes of teaching in a manner to meet the needs of different students (Tomlinson, 2004). They had developed the mindset to understand the fact that as each person has a unique gamut of capabilities and talents (Amoak, 2009), it is important to recognize and appreciate the unique paradigm of learning that each child or student brings to class. Some relevant excerpts from the transcript show instances of how the participants, following training, now appreciate the necessity to pay attention to the needs and

uniqueness of individual students through differentiated learning. Consequently, according to Trainee 8:

"You have to first of all know your students, it begins from there. When you know them, you know how to teach them well. I would say that the PG Education programme actually got me in a way to not get restricted to old patterns like if it worked for the previous group it would work for these students. I have come to understand that every child is different and in their difference there is their uniqueness." (Trainee 8)

Trainee 8 gives a concrete instance of how through her understanding of differentiated learning, she has been able to identify and support the learning needs of two autistic children in her lower primary class:

"I realise that I have two students in my class who are autistic. For one of them when you use single sounds and numbers he finds it difficult to learn. I came to understand that he notices by picture, by sight and by saying it. That is his uniqueness. Collectively when you are teaching sounds in a chorus way by singing and having fun with it, it helps the autistic children learn. This makes them feel part of the class and it makes teaching and learning more fun and easier." (Trainer 8)

Through the use of differentiated learning strategies to the unique learning needs of autistic children by making them feel part of the class, Trainee 8 ensures equity and inclusiveness in the creative teaching and learning process (Clapp, 2016). Similar to the experience of Trainee 8, Trainee 12 recognises the different learning styles of students and as a result now pays more attention to the needs of individual students in class, particularly with reference to their learning styles:

"I believe I do now pay more attention to the needs of individual students because formerly when I went to class I would consider everybody to be the same, whether you

are an audio learner, audiovisual, kinesthetic- everyone for me was the same. Now, I have realized people learn in different ways so after enrolling on the PG Education programme , I go to class and I recognise that I have students who are audiovisual learners and others are not." (Trainee 12)

In view of his appreciation for the different learning styles of his students, Trainee 12, incorporates targeted differentiated learning strategies when planning lessons as he demonstrates with an example of a student who has a short attention span:

"There is this particular student in my class who doesn"t really like you talking plenty for the 2-hour duration of the class. She gets bored easily and after barely 30 minutes, her concentration would be gone. So for such a person, I mostly now give her short assignments while in class to get her pre-occupied. When planning the class, I consider her because I know and acknowledge that her attention span is very short. But she is smart and she"s someone who requires more." (Trainee 12)

The importance of creatively planning lessons to incorporate strategies that ensure active participation of students and effective teaching has been emphasized by scholars such as Sawyer (2006). Thus, like Trainee 12, Trainee 16 equally considered it essential to have several methods and strategies to ensure that the varied needs of individual learners are met:

"Before I started this programme, the individual needs of students were not at the forefront of my mind. But now, before I prepare a lesson or when I am preparing a lesson, I take into account my different learners and their individual needs to create the lesson, so that I don"t use just one method of teaching but several methods to be able to meet the needs of individual learners." (Trainee 16)

Based on the understanding of student learning styles and abilities, trainees were subsequently able to teach creatively and for creativity using imaginative, innovative and divergent methods

and strategies which promoted inquiry, encouraged participation, enthusiasm and cooperation in class (Lucas, 2001). These methods and strategies include; inquiry method, demonstration, role play, dramatization, group discussion and pairing, audio-visual learning, debating, discovery through research and presentation (Starko, 2010).

There were many examples of the variety of creative methods and strategies employed by the participants in view of their training. For instance, Trainee 13 revealed that presently she starts lessons in the morning by getting pupils to become enthused as they sing and share their personal stories.

> *"Formerly, we would just start our lesson straight from Assembly, but now we have a starter: We have to sing a little, just to get their minds relaxed for the day. I would ask them questions like, how did your day go yesterday? What did you eat? And that gets them excited, all jumping around and then I infuse the lessons and we take it from there."*
>
> *(Trainee 13)*

The ability of Trainee 13 to find creative ways of starting her class resonates with typical characteristics of creative teachers to create and support environments of curiosity (Lily & Bramwell, 2004) as well as pass on their enthusiasm to learners (Lucas, 2001).

On her part, Trainee 7 reported of how through encouraging students to conduct research on deviant behaviours in a Social Studies class, students were able to unearth and present useful information which you would not normally find in the prescribed textbook:

> *"With reference to Social Studies, you give them a topic to go and research on they come and find out things that are actually not in their textbooks, so they now want to know if what they researched is true. I recently asked them to conduct research on deviant behaviours; I was amazed at the kind of information they had and when they presented, I*

myself ended up asking them questions because I wasn"t even aware of some of the things they found out." (Trainee 7)

For Trainee 12, he found group discussion as a necessary strategy for collobrative learning and exchange of divergent perspectives as he himself had discovered through training on the MA Education programme. In his own words,

"I had gone to learn about the benefits of group learning and we used discussions in our PG class. So once we used it and I realized people have different views, perspectives and ways of seeing things, I encourage my students to do group discussions."(Trainee 12)

In a subject like History, Trainee 14 following her exposure to creative teaching methods and strategies on the PG Education programme, she utilised role playing to treat the topic of the ―Big Six‖ who were leading personalities involved in the country's Independence struggle. Due to the need to recall the names involved, it was previously difficult treating the topic to her Lower

Primary class, but by creatively getting the pupils to play the roles of the personalities of the ―Big Six,‖ Trainee 14 succeeded at making the topic more fun. She indicated that the pupils were able to easily recall the names of the personalities involved when they were assessed at the end of the term:

"In our History class, I knew from previously teaching the topic on the Big Six that it was difficult. This time around, I decided to use the children for role playing, so I pointed out six boys in the class and told them they were the Big Six and named them accordingly, so anytime I mentioned Big Six, they have to mention their names; they would take turns to role play and mention their Big Six names: I"m Edward Akufo-Addo, I"m Paa Grant, I am

Arko Adjei, I"m Kwame Nkrumah and so forth. At the end of this term, I gave them a

question on the names of the Big Six and everyone in class got it correct. They could easily remember the names as represented by their colleagues in class. The course has helped me to be creative with regards to the way I teach." (Trainee 14)

Similar to the role-playing strategy employed by Trainee 14 to successful outcomes, Trainee 16 who teaches ICT in Upper Primary, used dramatisation to get students to learn and appreciate the use of Microsoft Excel programme:

"It"s easier to act out certain scenarios to make students understand the concept that you are trying to teach. Recently, I brainstormed with the students and asked them what situations they think Microsoft Excel would be useful, having explained to them what the programme is used for. They came up with scenarios of professions and dramatised situations like a doctor who instead of calling out folders, had a list of patients on Excel. Other students acted as bankers, accountants and so forth." (Trainee, 16).

According to Trainee 16, the creative use of dramatisation got students keenly involved in the lesson, they discovered the practical benefits of the Excel computer programme and that,

"Students realised that the programme is actually profitable for everyday life. The idea of the subject is to teach them not only for the future but also for the present."

As part of strategies to foster creative teaching and learning, participants utilised information communication technology (ICT) tools in class. Trainee 7 for instance indicated how her teengage students at the Senior High School level were becoming skilled at PowerPoint presentations:

"With the students too, they never knew that computers and ICT had anything to do with English and Social studies, but now they do. They are becoming more practical with the ICT because I just don"t allow one person to do the PowerPoint presentation, everyone gets to bring his or her creative side to contribute to preparation of slides and presentation." (Trainee 7)

Indeed, Craft (2015) advocates for the use of ICT tools which promote collaborative learning, discovery and problem-solving in developing the creativity of children. It is in this regard that Trainee 13, 18, 19 and 20 also used online audio-visual tools like YouTube in explaining concepts such as the metamorphosis of a butterfly to a Lower Primary class:

> *"With regards to my creativity in class, I have learnt how to inculcate ICT in my lessons. For instance, previously we could learn about the stages of a butterfly, the children would not be able to get it well, but by infusing videos on YouTube for them to see how the stages occur it really got them to understand what I was teaching." (Trainee 13, 18, 19, and 20)*

As stated by Csikszentmihalyi (2012), children growing up in the 21st century do so within universes of virtual electronics, hence the use of ICT tools in creative pedagogy is appropriate and essential.

In respect of assessments, some participants reported using creative and formative ways of assessing students to enhance creative thinking abilities. Trainee 7 for instance shows how she has shifted from the use of usual class tests to now using more class presentations by students as a means of assessment:

> *"Formerly it was just the class tests, but now I hardly do class tests. Instead of the class tests, we do the presentations, and we score. The one who contributes a lot also gets additional marks, so you get all of them talking. These are planned constructive approaches to assessment." (Trainee 7)*

In addition to the constructive ways of assessing students, other participants, through their understanding of theories of learning on the PG Education programme, were now motivating students to learn through positive reinforcement as a creative teaching strategy. For instance, Trainee 14, 15 and 16 stated that:

"Formerly, I was quite quick to punish a student. But now, if a person pays more attention, I give him/her a sticker and I shower them with praises. So because I praise them, everyone wants me to shower them praises so they pay attention. That"s one way that has helped a lot." (Trainee 14, 15 and 16)

It is clear from the above findings that the use of teaching methods and strategies such as roleplaying, dramatisation, research, presentation, demonstration, ICT tools, positive reinforcement, among others by participants clearly foster the learner-centred approaches, active participation, playfulness, imagination and cooperative learning essential for creative pedagogy (Lin, 2009).

Research Question 2

What ways do the creative methods of teaching used by practicing teacher trainees affect teaching and learning?

This category of description delves into the transformations-on students and teachers alike-emanating from the implementation of improved and creative ways of teaching. With regards to students, excerpts from the transcript reveal that they have become empowered and confident; students are in addition curious and asking more questions; they have also developed more interest and love for subjects, they are proactive and are no more afraid to make mistakes as they enjoy class and are excited about learning.

To start with, it was noted that as a result of the improved ways of teaching by participants, students were asking broader questions and connecting trends with what they learn in class. Trainee 1 for instance revealed that,

─They (students) are now able to ask questions and not just any question; they ask questions that probably are even out there on social media, political issues, things that they have heard." (Trainee 1)

The ability of students to inquire not only about classroom issues but wondering about issues pertaining to their daily socio-cultural realities implies that the students were learning creatively and consequently broadening their horizons. As stated by Di Paolantonio (2014), it is important to cultivate creative thinking in school through a pathos of wonderment that enable both teachers and students to dwell on questions which although may not necessarily be applicable or practical to the immediate classroom situation, lead to the generation of creative ideas and solutions.

Some participants equally reported of students' hightened interests and enthusiams in different subjects such as Literature, English, Science and History. This affirms the fact that creative pedagogy cuts across subject domains and not limited to the arts (Runco, 2007).

> *"The PG Education programme has made teaching easier and learning enjoyable for my students especially when we do Literature. They are now allowed to come out with their opinions and defend them to make logical sense. When I use things like puzzles, they are like, „We didn"t know English was this interesting…we didn"t know there are other creative ways of learning the language."" (Trainee 2)*

For participant 12 who teaches History at the secondary school level, his improved and creative ways of teaching as a result of the PG Education programme do not only lead to keen interest in the subject but also a new found autonomy for students. As emphasised by Taber (2006), knowledge is not an imposition and that learners ought to be guided to construct their own knowledge. Hence, enlightened by the constructivist approach to teaching and learning, Trainee 12 views himself as a teacher who facilitates students' construction of their own knowledge. By giving students more opportunity to express themselves, students have stopped negative behaviours such as sleeping during class as they are now eager to learn and they feel in charge of what they learn. They now actively participate in class discussions and feel a certain ownership of the History class as revealed by Trainee 12 in the following excerpt:

"I have also come to the realization that the more power you give to students, the more they contribute in class. Power being you giving them the chance for them to express themselves. That has also stopped them from sleeping in class. Everybody is eager to have his or her turn to explain a topic. Now they ask me anything and if I don"t know I may throw it back to them, so they learn from each other. As a result, they feel when they come to class they take charge of their learning. I have heard them telling their colleagues that „The History Class is for us" I make them own the space." (Trainee 12)

In encouraging students to own their learning space, Trainee 12 was able to ensure the autonomy of learners which according to Craft (2015) and Lin (2009) is important for nurturing creative thinking. Trainee 12 further gave an instance of one student's keen interest in ensuring she did not miss the History class, even when she was out of school for a medical check-up at the hospital:

"A student who used to complain in class about stomach ache and would usually be found with her head on her desk during History class has since changed. In fact recently, she went for a check-up at the hospital. She wasn"t supposed to be in class, but she came to school purposely for the History class. She said she had found out something through research and wanted to come and debate and verify with me. During the class, she brought it up and we all discussed it and she got the understanding she wanted. After the History class, she called her mum to come and pick her up and she left for the house." (Trainee 12)

Another participant, Trainee 11, expressed satisfaction from knowing that due to the effects of her improved and creative ways of teaching, students are now in love with the subject she teaches, that is, Integrated Science, which was formerly considered difficult.

"I am satisfied, because I have actually got them to love Integrated Science. Once they love the subject, learning it becomes easier." (Trainee 11)

In terms of effects of the use of creative teaching methods and strategies, Trainee 16 revealed that her students become excited whenever she uses dramatisation or game-based learning:

> *"The students are also very excited by my improved ways of teaching, especially the use of theatre (dramatisation) and games. When you tell them that at the end of a lesson you"ll play a game, their level of excitement completely skyrockets." (Trainee 16)*

As participants implement creative teaching methods and strategies in class which impact on students, the participants themselves report of being transformed by their practice of creative pedagogy. Trainees who prior to enrolling on the PG Education programme never thought of themselves as creative now do and the more they practice creative teaching, the more their creative abilities heighten. This affirms Sternberg's (1999) assertion that creative practice generates more motivation.

As the following excerpts from the transcript show, participants have been positively impacted by their practice especially in terms of their emotional wellbeing as they are now more confident, enthused, energized, more creative, efficient, intentional and satisfied. These attributes of emotional wellbeing prove the devotion of teachers to duty, genuine interest to facilitate learning and high levels of positive energy which according to Lily and Bramwell (2004) are essential for creative teaching and learning. In the case of Trainee 2 for instance, she now feels excited going to teach because she has become more confident due to her improved practice of planning and delivery of lessons:

> *"The impact of the PG Education programme has been a lot. For instance, my school doesn"t require me to write lessons plans but because of what I have learnt on my MA programme, I don"t go to class unprepared. I plan my lessons. It has become a part of me because I know it is valuable and this has made me feel so much confident. When I"m teaching, I know what I"m about and it helps me to deliver well. I"m just excited going to*

work and students are also happy to see me. I am having fun, that"s the thing, really. The PG *programme has really helped me to be more creative."(Trainee 2)*

Like Trainee 2, Trainee 3 reported of improvement in class management due to her now creative ways of teaching, there is no room for students to misbehave primarily because students are keenly involved in classroom activities:

"I will say the PG Education programme has helped me to improve upon the control and management of my class. I realised that the only time students misbehave is when they feel bored or there is nothing happening. But with some of these methods I now use, you realize there is no room for misbehaving because there is an interest and everybody wants to partake." (Trainee 3)

Lucas (2001) stated that one distinctive characteristic of a creative teacher is her ability to learn from students. In this regard, Trainee 7 indicated how her training on the PG Education programme had led to personal transformations as she is now able to learn from students. She revealed that she is more efficient as together with her students she accomplishes her lessons within a short period of time. And like her colleague Trainee 2, Trainee 7 now enjoys teaching and looks forward to going to class:

"There has been a very big transformation in me, in the sense that at first in class I thought I was the only custodian of knowledge, but now I am learning more from the students. Sometimes the questions they ask me push me to read more than I used to. It"s fun. It"s interesting. I get home and look forward to going to school the next day. They are discovering and constructing their own knowledge and I can do a lot within a short period of time." (Trainee 7)

A few more excerpts from the transcript highlight how participants have grown in confidence, especially by producing desired results. Trainee 13 for instance stated that she is now bold,

happy and energised in the awareness that she can confidently utilise different creative ways to teach:

> *"I"m happy…I feel more energized going to class now, I am more bolder as compared to former times when I"d have to learn and read whatever I was going to teach, but now I"m bold and happy with myself knowing that I am able to find different and creative ways to start and deliver lessons." (Trainee 13)*

There have also been varieties of experiences of improved and empathetic relationships between teachers and students, as well as between teachers and parents who provide useful feedback about the effects of teaching. For instance,

> *"Sometimes I get positive feedback from the parents about the positive impacts of my new ways of teaching. The students also show concern and want to be helpful. I have students I taught last term who are now in Grade 6 and JSS 1. They come all the way to me and say, „Sir we want to check up on you, how are you doing?" And I"m surprised and motivated to do much more." (Trainee 1)*

On her part, Trainee 14 revealed how a mother compared the difference in how she taught her daughter a few years back and the improvement in her son's current learning experience with Trainee 14:

"For one parent, I taught her daughter a few years ago and I"m teaching her son now. She recently remarked that how her son is learning is better than how her daughter learnt. I told her that I know. The son is able to learn better and understand things better as compared to the daughter with regards to the same topics. I know that I have improved thanks to the PG Education programme." (Trainee 14)

Discussion

It was evident that most teachers previously, mainly used and relied on the lecture method to deliver their lessons. However, through the training obtained on the MA Education programme, they discovered that the lecture method is generally not useful for creative pedagogy because it does not involve the students as learners. They were now equipped with varied student-centred and creative methods and strategies for teaching. The methods and strategies adopted following their training include but not limited to; differentiated learning (Tomlinson, 2004), which was foundational to their use of other instructional methods like dramatization, presentation, peer-topeer and co-operative learning, debating, discussions, among others. According to Sahlberg (2009), these child-centered and constructivists methods and strategies of learning lead to participation, cooperation and creative problem-solving skills.

These creative pedagogical methods and strategies cut across subject domains and levels of the school system (Kaufman & Baer, 2005), and in the case of this research from Lower

Primary to Secondary levels. It was established that irrespective of the subject areas such as Language studies (Spanish and English), Social Studies, Religious and Moral Education, Arts, Science, ICT, History, Mathematics and Economics, the methods yielded positive impacts, including students' increased interest and enthusiasm in some of these subjects. This finding proves a view expressed by Runco (2007) that the strategies entailed in creative pedagogy are not limited to the arts and they must be applied to all subject areas.

There were transformations in the learning experiences of both students and teachers in respect of creative and improved ways of teaching by trainees following their exposure and training on the MA Education course. It was discovered from the study that students had become more curious, confident, empowered, proactive, developed keen interests in certain subjects that they previously did not like and they enjoyed participating and collaborating with their peers. Thus, the students had become empowered, commited to their own learning. As creative learners,

students of participants were as reiterated by Smith, Nerantzi and Middleton (2014) now able to ask more questions and were not afraid to make mistakes as they learn how to think and be creative. Undoubtedly, these learning outcomes point to the practical realisation of the social constructivism (Taber, 2006) which underpines creative pedagogy.

On the other hand, the in-service teacher trainees who were interviewed had drastically transformed their ways of practice due to the training they received so far. Most participant teachers proved Lucas' (2001) assession that creative teachers are willing to learn from students and are not afraid to make and admit to making mistakes. They were mostly now aware of their creative abilities and more confident as they deliver desired results like improved grades and being able to relate better and understand the needs of their students. They were now expressing attributes of emotional wellbeing as they had become more confident, intentional about their teaching practices while being more energized, enthused and satisfied with their work. It is such positive attributes of emotional wellbeing which Lily and Bramwell (2004) emphasised as essential for creative teaching and learning. Some trainee teachers also described improved relationships with parents of students who gave them positive feedback about the transformative changes they had observed in their wards at home.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It can be concluded that teacher trainees mentored by teacher educators who by *Training for Creativity* do not consider themselves fonts of all knowledge will influence teachers to practice creative pedagogy also not afraid to make and admit to their mistakes in class. This is a crucial mindset shown in this research to be essential to creative pedagogy because it changes the perception of students who, no longer considering their teachers as all-knowing, are unafraid to make mistakes as they learn.

From the research, it can be deduced that teachers are employed and left to their fate with whatever to do to teach children. There appears to be inadequate or absence of orientation training programmes for newly employed teachers. Schools, especially private schools, should have training in creative pedagogies for newly employed teachers as part of orientation and regularly as they continue to teach so that they are in touch with the trends of 21st century education.

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