

Chapter Nine

Creativity

This chapter explores the concept of creativity and instruction in creative thinking. I start by presenting an analysis of my perceptive of the concept of creativity and move on to the stages of creativity. In the section ‘How to assess creativity?’ I have reflected on the various measures of creativity and the development rating scale I used to measure the level of creativity in my students.

I have presented my findings in the form of a table, a graph and in the form of two narratives. Presenting the data analysis as narratives is an attempt to produce a series of patterns that connect and capture the children’s levels of creativity at various stages of evolution

Section 1

Understanding creativity

A sound definition of creativity is ‘*the ability to articulate novel ways of tackling a problem and of organising material*’ (Fontana, 1995, p.114). Wallas (1945) offered four stages involved in a creative act: ‘*Preparation, Incubation, Inspiration and Verification*’ (p 52-54).

- Preparation, which is concerned with recognising that a particular problem is worth studying.
- Incubation, during which the problem is thought over often at an unconscious state.
- Inspiration, when a possible solution comes into the conscious mind.
- Verification, when the solution is put to test.

Each of these stages has its importance (Fontana, 1995). At the outset it is the ability of a creative person to see a problem or theme that has been disregarded by others. During the preparation stage, the person explores various possibilities associated with the problem. In the incubation stage, the thought process continues at an unconscious level. According to me, it is the third stage that is really an important stage of a creative act, the stage of inspiration. It is like a flash of lightening, or as we say in India ‘*demag ki batti jal gae*’,

which means – the light source of the mind ignited. Inspiration is followed by the testing stage, where the ideas must be put to test. Details may need to be revised and re-revised.

Gardner (1993) defines the creative individual as:

‘...a person who regularly solves problems, fashions products, or defines new questions in a domain, in a way that is initially considered novel but ultimately becomes accepted in a particular cultural setting.’ (p. 54)

Thus an act of creativity is an invention that seems novel, but is later accepted within the appropriate community. Judgements of creativity can only be made by knowledgeable members of the field suggests Gardner (1993).

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) suggests that the first and foremost characteristic of creative individuals is mastery of a domain of knowledge or skill. Without mastery of a domain, thinking is not likely to lead to creative products. To be creative the ‘invention’ must be intended. An accidental act may produce an interesting piece of drama, for example, but that is not an act of creativity unless the actor recognises the potential of the accident and uses it to create a work of art. A child may spend many happy hours ‘making’ a play. Would s/he then be going through a creative process?

As not all creations are equally creative. Way (1967) suggests that creativity be viewed from the *‘from the standpoint of the doer and from that person’s personal level of readiness and experience, no matter how primitive that level may be.’ (p.3)*

How to assess creativity?

Psychologists often use Torrance’s Tests of Creative Thinking (Woolfolk, 2001). Torrance (1972; Torrance and Hall, 1980) developed two types of tests to measure creativity, one is a verbal and the other is a graphic test. In a classroom situation, teachers usually rely on their own judgement of creative thinking. However, Torrance (1970) argues that there is no correlation between the teacher’s judgement of their student’s creative ability and the actual creativity these children displayed in their adult lives. Such reports put me in a quandary. Who would assess the child’s need and growth in a classroom situation? How would I, the teacher, validate my student’s learning if there were no correlation between my judgement and a child’s creativity?

According to Amabile (1996), creativity can be measured by three assessment techniques: creativity tests, such as personality inventories, biographical inventories, behavioural test, objective analysis of products, and subjective judgments.

The fact that I was not just teaching creativity and creative thinking in isolation had to be kept in mind. I was teaching drama, and as drama in itself is a creative medium, I believed the children's creative levels would increase as a result of the process of working through drama. Regrettably, most of the instruments devised for testing creativity are pen and paper tests and are not relevant to drama. Another serious problem with all the major tests of creative thinking is that they are lengthy in administration and that they also require an expert who is trained in the specific use and interpretation of the tests. Simple forms of these instruments have not been developed, nor have they been successful in predicting creativity (Messick, 1988).

The first problem concerns the reliability of these tests, as their validity has not been adequately established and secondly, like most teachers, I am not trained to use these tests. Moreover, my views regarding assessment are in sync with Gardner (1993). He suggests that an assessment in a particular intelligence or set of intelligences should be solved '*in the material of that intelligence*' (p. 31). This implies that drama skills should be assessed in a drama setting.

I scrutinised these tests and investigated their applicability to enable me to judge the creativity of my students and the progress they made, or did not make as the case may be, in drama and in general creative thinking. Importantly, I value an assessment format that would do justice to the art form-drama, rather than crafting a curriculum to suit the assessment (Gardner, 1993).

Keeping this in mind, I made a list of characteristics of a creative child/person. As a reference I used list of personality traits of the creative person compiled by Stein (in Smith, 1988) and Gough's (1960) Adjective Check List. Since the earliest days of creativity research, Adjective Check Lists have been fixtures in measuring creative personality (Domino, 1994).

Gough's Adjective Check List identifies a subscale of thirty adjectives that reliably differentiated more creative people from less creative people. Nineteen of these distinguishing adjectives are positively related to creativity. They are: autonomous, capable,

confident, egotistical, humorous, individualistic, informal, insightful, intelligent, inventive, introvert, knowledgeable and with wide interests, original, reflective, resourceful, self-confident, snobbish, and unconventional. I then studied the rating scale suggested by Sattler (1988) and formatted my own rating scale (Appendix 15).

The rating scale helped me chart the progress made by the students. I treated the numbers on the rating scales as reference points, which I used to chart the change in the children. I measured the level of the children's creativity the end of each cycle: in March 2002, October 2002, February 2003, April 2003, and August 2003. With the help of the rating scale I could see 'the shifting points' in their creative levels as they learnt about emotions in Cycle1-2 and the 'self' in Cycle 3-4.

There was an impressive change in the pupils' creative thinking, in the domains of drama making, story telling, arts and crafts. I describe the events that took place, in the context of story telling, as stories have the power to reach within us; it is a way of knowing, remembering and understanding.

'In every language, in every part of the world, story is the fundamental grammar of all thoughts and communication. By telling ourselves what happened, to whom, and why, we not only discover ourselves and the world, but we change and create ourselves and the world too.'

(Chambers, 1983: p.36)

This view appropriately sums up the importance of story in our lives. Storytelling has always been a technique of expressing knowledge, feelings, thoughts and ideas. Personal experience stories, retelling of original stories, point of view stories and imaginary journeys facilitate drama making.

Moreover, story telling played an important role in my class as it:

- is an integral part of drama;
- is embedded in all cultures;
- is a form of communication;
- develops thinking skills;
- stimulates talk. It is primary an oral activity and gives the teller an opportunity to practise spoken language;
- reduces inhibitions, as all the participants can contribute to the sessions in small

meaningful ways;

- helps in shaping ideas and experiences into meaningful units.

Section 2- In the Classroom

Shifting points

I show that creativity has increased, decreased or stayed static, as the case may be, with the use of a rating scale (Appendix 15). However, scores are not adequate, as they would not really indicate the hows and whys of the students' creative thinking skill. I am more interested in offering an explanation of the process of learning rather than just showing scores and observations. I had to see, as Heathcote (1994) saw in her students, the '*the tapestry in the thread ...*' (p. 116) at the same time I also had to see the threads that formed the tapestry.

In the first assessment most of the children had middle to low level scores on the rating scale (Table 23, p.266) except for Mukul and Nihar who had particularly low score. My explanation for the entire group's tendency to show a lower level in the beginning is:

- The group had never worked together.
- They had not worked out their relationship with me.
- Had not enough commitment to the drama class.
- Displayed characteristics of a mild general learning disability (see Chapter 3, p.66; Table 7, p.120).
- Learning in a drama class was a unique and unusual experience for them.

As the module progressed, there was a change in these characteristics. They became friendlier with each other and could work well together. Additionally, they gradually became less self-conscious (e.g. '*The miracle of relationships*', p.115). There was a progressive gain in their self-esteem and could confidently make suggestions in class. With the passage of time they felt an ownership for the drama class.

In Cycle1, I was not only disappointed when we did the first two 'building a story' classes, but was also worried at their inability to tell stories (see p.243)

As I have mentioned before, I was not attempting to bring about change in storytelling but I aimed at enhancing their creative thinking skills. To this end, it was not only drama skills that I was aiming at. I wanted to cultivate, in the students a love for learning, to help them recognize and act upon their capabilities. I believe that as the general creative thinking skills in the children improved they would be able to apply it in the field of their choice.

‘The shifting points’ of my data analysis are conveyed through two monologues, narrated by Nihar. Nihar, Manni, Lali, Chandani are the students who attended the drama class and Girl in the monologues is me. I have sourced these narratives from the data collected during class hours, which are in the form of audio-recordings, transcripts and journal entries. The shift in the learning can be also seen in the scores of the rating scale (Table 23, p.266) and the graph (Table 24, p.267), which represent the scores. However, through these monologues I wish to reconstruct and re-present ‘*doing of my field rather than simply the doer or the done*’ and scores (Van Maanen, 1988: p.102).

Two stories and Nihar

The first paragraph represents the children pre-learning level of creativity, from the data of which was collected during Cycle 1.

The paragraphs beginning from the line ‘And then one day...’- to ‘...take me long to go there ...’ is re-presentation of the data from the class on 9-2-02, the fifth class in which only Lali and Chandani attended. Here I have reflected upon a successful storytelling session. This fifth class encouraged me to revisit storytelling activities with the whole class, which proved to be unproductive (see the lines ‘Since Girl liked Chandani’s story... we didn’t know how to tell stories’).

‘Then Girl thought of a plan...’ is the implementation of my curriculum in drama, which I have discussed in the sections that follow; ‘My reflections-on-action’ and ‘The classroom atmosphere’.

‘Then, after implementing the plan...’ to ‘Mira was relieved to see the cat go ...’ is a narration of the sixteenth class on 31. 8.2002. It is a report of a successful storytelling session, which showed a significant change in the children’s creative thinking.

Girl in the story is me, the teacher.

All us like to talk so much, Manni, Lali, Kanha and all, so Girl thought we would all be good storytellers, even though she had kind of guessed we were bad with words. But we did not realise how difficult it is to tell stories. She tried a one-word story. How hard could that get! She tried one-sentence stories... disappointingly...

And then one day, in the days when we hardly knew each other, Lali and Chandani met her, all by themselves and told Girl a story about a mermaid. Chandani called it her Dream Story. They not only told her the story, but also drew it, in case Girl didn't understand what they were trying to tell her. It was a very interesting story...

Chandani began the story, "Once I was going... I went to a beach, I... we... my sister and I ...we were playing with the ball... we...I kicked and the ball went far away. I ran behind the ball, I saw a midas sitting over there."

"A midas! What is a midas?" asked Girl.

Girl is not very clever thought Chandani, "A midas is half part fish."

"Ohhh..." said Girl very impressed.

"I was frightened," continued Chandani. "I don't know who was she. And then the midas, said don't worry; I'll not eat you up," Chandani and Lali, in the beginning did not draw. They just made Girl draw, and so Girl said that is not fair.

And the story went on how the midas promised to take Chandani under the water. She went with the midas to a sandwichland, which had Ladu[a round sweet-meat] as the king. They talked of going underwater and seeing blue whales, that were bigger than sharks!! and octopuses on the beach.

Girl wanted to name the midas ...I mean mermaid (she said that was the correct word) ... and wanted them to describe the mermaid, and the beach and the sea. But both Chandani and Lali couldn't do that. They did not know how to use colourful words.

Actually, it was mainly Chandani's story, Lali kept quiet most of the time.



Chandani and Lali doing the Mermaid Story.

Funnily the story ended abruptly; because all of a sudden Chandani (in the story) got tired and ran ...and ran all the way home and when her sister asked her where she had been Chandani said, "the ball went very far so it takes me long to go there."

Since Girl liked Chandani's story, she wanted to hear another one. But we were not happy telling stories. Not because we did not like stories but because we didn't know how to tell stories. Then Girl thought of a plan...

...Then, after implementing the plan ...many days later (actually on the Thirty-first of August 2002) ... Girl said let's draw and tell stories, instead of going for a walk and looking at statues. This time, Girl began the story...

"A girl was walking down the road carrying a big bag..." started Girl. "What is her name?" asked Girl, who wants names for everything be it children, emotions or even statues. Sometimes she even names walks!

"Mira," said Chandani.

"But how was she feeling?" said Girl, who now wanted to know more about Mira.

Samir who is a happy child and likes to be with us said, "Happy."

So it was decided, Mira was happy as she walked down the road on a bright sunny day.

But Girl was not satisfied. So she asked, "Mira had gone shopping and she had a big, heavy bag in her hand. How was she feeling?"

Girl is so curious; she always wants to know more!

Kanha, who knew his turn to speak had come said, "Heaviness?"

Looking at our puzzled faces he added, "Oh, I know...Tired... very tired. Her hand was hurting."

Pleased with the answer Girl smiled and said, "And a cat came and said meeoow!! Mira was...?"

"Frightened" screamed Chandani, shrieking really loudly.

"Eeeeeeeeeeee!!!"

Chandani screeched so loudly that Sarla was upset with her as she was shouting in Sarla's ear.

That was not nice, her yelling. Everybody started taking sides and bickering with each other. Girl had to calm us down and get us back to the story.



Sarla drawing 'Mira and the cat' story

Sarla who was anxious to get on said, "Then Mira dashed all the way home. And banged the door shut. She then leaned against the door. Ahhh!! She was so relieved to be home."

But the cat was very clever and came into the house! Through an open window. Just imagine! Mira was frightened and didn't know what

to do. So her mother suggests that she give the cat something to eat.

"Milk", said Kanha and Samir.

Yes, thought all of us, that is a good idea. So, Mira decided to give the cat a bowl of milk, which she fetched from the kitchen. But this cat was hungry or...plain greedy, after a large lick, the cat had one ...two ...three ...four ...five bowls of milk! Now this really irritated Mira, she was not happy to do so much fetching and giving. After five bowls of milk the cat satisfied and it went away...

And Mira was relieved to see the cat go...

My reflections-on-action

In this section I revisit the idea of creativity. I have written this section after the narrative, as it is compatible with my reflections after numerous unsuccessful storytelling sessions in Cycle 1.

Part of the teacher's role in fostering creative thinking abilities is that of building students' understanding of the concepts, skills and processes of the various disciplines in the field. However, before I even attempted to do so I had to re-view my understanding of why creative thinking should be encouraged. What were my goals? How would I promote creative thinking skills? What was my plan?

I had to become increasingly more reflective in my own practice in order to build my values, skills, knowledge into the subject of drama-in-education and life skill management. I did this with the help of:

- My personal experiences and professional experience.
- An investigation on drama and drama education.
- A literature review on methods of socio-psychology and life skills learning.

I believe creative thinking is:

- A special kind of thinking that involves imagination, originality and innovation (Fontana, 1995).
- An ability to generate a range of possible solutions to a given problem (Guilford, 1967).

Creative thinking is generally considered to be involved with the creation or generation of ideas, processes, and experiences (Amabile, 2001). Creative thinking, like education is a process of change. To elicit their potential, I had to arouse their curiosity, stir up their imagination and raise their self-esteem and confidence in their work and in themselves, which I did by making modifications in my practice (see ‘Classroom atmosphere’ below).

Claiming that there has been a change in the creative level is a slippery subject.

Now as I write this thesis I am confident I can show:

- That there was an augmentation in the students’ creative thinking skills.
- How I acted as a catalyst.
- To what level there was a progress and why.
- Why some changes did not occur.

Classroom atmosphere

The role of the teacher in helping to improve students' creative thinking abilities includes examining the personal qualities required of teachers by such a goal and the classroom climate and teaching practices which best support it. I have reflected on these in the following sections beginning with ‘Classroom atmosphere’ and continuing into ‘Reflection’ and ‘A shift’. My reflections-on-action are in the bold font.

The first move to encourage creativity was to establish an ‘open classroom atmosphere’ where the children felt ‘safe’ that was proactive and student-centred. I strongly believe that creativity flourishes better in a non-judgemental classroom where children are as much responsible for the smooth functioning of the class as is the teacher. To encourage an open classroom atmosphere that was democratic and enabled negotiated learning I strived to incorporate certain qualities in my classroom.

According to me:

- A teacher should act as a facilitator and be careful not to impose adult ideas and beliefs upon the children. They should encourage students to follow their own thinking and not simply repeat what the teacher has said (see, Chapter 2, p.33 ; also Chapter 5, p.103-4).

‘Don’t be in a rush. Think for one minute and then go and do something.’

Transcript: Class8-9.3.2002

I would often use instructions like these...to help them to think for themselves, as I had noticed if I explained by giving examples they would just mimic me. If I said, “Say... each ... word...clearly ...opening ...your ...mouth ...properly.” They would say...the ... sentence ...in the...same ...pace...and not actually follow the instruction.

- A teacher should be tolerant and demonstrate an acceptance of opinions and viewpoints other than theirs and be willing to admit a mistake. These are essential steps in creating a supportive classroom environment.

Swaroop: ... I’m sorry Lalli I didn’t see you. You should have let me know... “Miss you forgot me!”

Transcript: Class 4- 2.2.2002

- A teacher should consistently allow students a choice in learning by offering students opportunities to choose activities from a range of appropriate choices (Chapter 5, p.147).

Swaroop: Then what do you want to do?

Student: Our choice...? You ...do... do... our choice?

Swaroop: Your choice? ...Okay. Your choice of emotions.

Transcript: Class12-20.7.2002

At every step in the class I wanted to give the children a choice to select what they wanted to do. I planned the theme of the class, the children, however, could select the direction they were going in. Here, for example, when we were performing short plays on different emotions, the children choose the emotion they would enact.

- A teacher should demonstrate genuine interest in the students' learning. I believe this is enabled by in-depth exploration in the pertinent subject. A teacher should try to eliminate stereotypes and employ meaningful activities in which different subject areas are integrated.

There was never a moment when I was away from my teaching. I got the inspiration to teach, the idea of individuality of the 'self', while driving to school. While listening to the cassette of the musical 'Cats', I admired Eliot's flawless description of each cat. I thought how unique each one is ...just like my students! These thoughts started the process, which culminated in the self-awareness classes.

I provided what Taylor (1996) calls 'a richly coloured scaffold' (p. 52) by using the technique of 'stopping to consider' and 'teacher-in-role', assisting them to deepen their work in drama. These were method I had not even heard of when I started this research. I tapped these avenues (Chapter 5, p.133) after reading and understanding Taylor (1996) and Heathcote (1984).

- A teacher should seek imaginative, appropriate and ethical solutions to problems. Approach learning creatively by using the problems that naturally occur in everyday life (see Step 6, p.143-4).

Swaroop: Is it fair when somebody is acting people are not looking? I am not saying that you all didn't, you (*referring to Sarla*) watched. I know that you too watched (*addressing Chandani*). But is it fair that when I am talking or I am acting and you (*talking to the whole class*) are looking out of the window. Is it fine?

Not watching the group performing was a problem we often had in the class. In this particular class the boys were more interested in looking out of the window, than watching the girls act. However, I made it a point to address the whole class and not just the boy so as to not put them on the defensive. I had noticed if I corrected one group they would invariably argue back and then it would lead to a ‘free for all’. Which I think is ultimately a waste of time and energy.

This approach enabled me to get my message across to the boys, as they knew they were the ones at fault, and at the same time I had not pointed a finger at them.

- A teacher must become an appropriate role model; she/he should be sensitive to the students’ level of knowledge and degree of sophistication (cf. decision to permit Mukul to stay off-stage, p.222, rule ‘I pass’, p.106).

Eight of the ten children had a writing problem. While filling in the worksheets keeping in mind that this was something that pulled them down in regular school I often performed the role of a scribe.

I encouraged Nihar, who was weak at expressing himself in words, to draw in the diary, as he genuinely enjoyed drawing and excelled at it.

Sarla, Nihar, Mukul, Samir and Pratik were not fluent in expressive or receptive language skills, weak at processing oral language and had little oral fluency. At no stage in the class was anybody allowed to make fun of how something was said. On my part I often corrected them gently. I often spoke to them or let them answer in their mother tongue.

- A teacher should show understanding to physical elements that enable learning and should organize an optimal physical arrangement for the classroom.

I was very keen on always spending ‘reflection time’ in a circle (cf. Mosley, 1997). It was my mistake to think it was a democratic move, where each child could speak and no one had a superior position. I should have kept in mind that some of the children would have a low self-esteem, a secondary characteristic of learning disability.

Mukul and Nihar for example mostly sat behind one of their friends. They felt safer that way. I had often marked that when we sat in a circle they hardly spoke. However, when they sat in a random fashion, they unobtrusively gave their opinion.

Therefore, after Cycle1 I stopped insisting on sitting in a perfect circle.

- Frequent evaluation, especially during initial stages of learning, makes children afraid to explore new ideas. Thus a teacher should allow children to learn and discover without the threat of immediate evaluation (cf. the decision not to grade diaries on p.181). Additionally, teacher students should be allowed to participate in the assessment of their learning.

At the end of Cycle 1 they were surprised when they had to assess their own performance. In the beginning they were not good at it, however in Cycle 3 they could effectively assess both their peers and themselves and can be perceived adept assessment of peers and self after annual programme (Chapter 7, p.222-224).

Reflection

Reflection played an important role in enhancing understanding at all levels in this research. Organizing a ‘structured controversy’ is a way to foster creativity (Klenz, 1987). That is, involving students in discussions, which attempt to see more than one side of an issue and call for students to back arguments with evidence. Torrance (1962) suggests that teachers should encourage children to speculate – “What would happen if...?” The most important aspect in developing a climate conducive to creative thinking is to increase students' will or motivation to behave reflectively.

Swaroop: ... You have to tell me what you thought of today's class. Whether you liked it or not....[If] you got bored.... And what you liked and didn't like ...and why.

An attitude of enquiry and reflection was set from the first class. The children were surprised as in schools in India, the concept of 'circle time' is not prevalent nor do the children and teacher reflect on the days work together. However, most of these children took it in their stride and started expressing their opinion immediately. Those that did not caught on and soon started reflecting in class.

In the first class when we were discussing what we like and did not like about the class most answered in monosyllables like; nice, noisy, nothing. When it was Pratik's turn, he said elephants. Elephants!? I thought to myself, where on earth did he get that? Now, this was an opportunity I did not want to miss, hence I probed further.

Swaroop: I didn't understand. What did you say?

Pratik: Elephants.

Swaroop: Now I understandthose elephants? ...You didn't; like those elephants?
*(pointing to some craft work stuck on the wall, noticing them for the first time.
Some children giggle finding the answer irrelevant.)*

I did not allow the giggles to get out off hand as I wanted Pratik to think and answer.

Swaroop: Ok! Pratik you didn't like those elephants? ...Tell me, Pratik why didn't you like the elephants?

Manni: Because...

Samir:Because they are funny...

I did not allow Manni and Samir to speak further for two reasons;

- **Pratik had stared the ball rolling and I think it was his privilege to continue.**
- **Looking at Manni's and Samir's faces, I knew that they were merely guessing and making up answers. On the other hand I was not sure about Pratik. I did not know if he just said elephant on an impulse or not.**

Swaroop: Pratik, what didn't you like about the elephants?

Pratik: The elephant is looking funny...

Swaroop: Oh, Oh...?

Pratik: (*speaking ...softly.*)

Swaroop: (*I repeated what he had just said*) The black elephants are looking funny ...and ...the grey ones with crowns are looking very nice. You like the grey ones ...and ...I like your answer very much, Pratik.

I do not know if the answer he gave was something he had thought of when he first answered - 'elephants'. However, I do know my encouraging him answer compelled him to think, and he did give a valid answer, as, when all of us looked closely at the elephant we agreed that the ones with the crowns (which were grey in colour) looked nicer than the black ones.

A shift

This section describes the analysis of the shift in the level of creativity in the students.

At the end of Cycle 2 I was pleased to see the change in them (Table 23). They could come up with ideas and could now slowly work on their own. The building of the second story 'Mira and the Cat' (beginning with lines '*Then, after implementing the plan*'- p.255) dated 31.8.02, revealed the progress my students were making in their ability to think creatively. By this time, I had led them through simple activities like basic drama games, 'walk', 'statues' and short plays of two to five minute durations.

The module at this time (Cycle 2) focused on learning about emotions and managing them. Most of the students progressed and had reached a level, where creative thinking was 'somewhat present'. A shift was seen in their curiosity, desire to share ideas, imagination, level of enthusiasm, willingness to take risk, a slight shift to the positive in self confidence and sense of identity as a creator. Kanha, Chandani, Lali and Sarla showed slight modification in the level where creativity was 'not present' to 'minimal present', however Mukul stayed at the same level.

Two children, Mukul and Pratik stayed on the same level on the rating scale. The reason for their lack of progress was that both were extremely irregular their attendance.

Pratik had a score that rated him above average when he started. His scores stayed the same and did not show a decline. This is so because when he was in class he was fully present and participating in all the class work. Mukul on the other hand, had an extremely low score, which he maintained. This was because when he attended he did not pay attention nor did he actively participate in the class activities. Both these children were the only children in the group who did not maintain their diary (see Chapter 6, p.181-3)

Nihar had progressed in traits like curiosity, willingness to day dream and fantasize and sense of identity as an originator. The last characteristic surfaced when he could demonstrate his skill in drawing. Nihar drew excellent figures in the diary the children maintained, he drew different emotions as they learnt them, instead of just writing (e.g. Chapter 6, p.183-4).

All the children were independent from the beginning. This trait was displayed as they came from families of low to middle income group. Their parents did not supervise their activities, nor did have helps to do so. Most of the children came school and went home unaccompanied.

All of them showed a lack of control for boredom. This is perceived positively in a drama class and in creative thinking; boredom encouraged the children to constantly 'do' something. As a teacher, I was kept on my toes and had to be sensitive enough to be aware of the mood of my class at all times.

At the end of Cycle 3+4 (note: assessment was done at the end of Cycle 4, cf. Chapter 5, p.144), a marked progress in creativity could be seen (Table 23). Only one child, Mukul, still maintained his low score. Nihar moved from the level where creativity was 'not present' to 'minimal present', Sarla and Kanha moved from level-'minimally present' to the next level where creativity was 'somewhat present', and Samir, Chandani, Lali, Manni, and Snehal shifted to the 'moderate present' level. Mukul and Pratik did not show a shift, as they continued to be irregular in their attendance in Cycle 3. However, they were regular in Cycle 4, as classes took place during school hours when we rehearsed for the annual programme, and then started attending the classes again in Cycle 5.

The most regular children, Nihar, Sarla and Kanha progressed at a steady pace. In Cycle 1 and 2, it was difficult to make Nihar do anything or say anything (see e.g. Appendix 2, p.4-6). He, however, was always paying attention. On my part did not

pressurise him, I always gave him an opportunity to take part, leaving the option of ‘I pass’ accessible.

The biggest shift in creative thinking occurred following the school annual program, which was a ‘critical event’ in their lives. After the program they had all gained immensely in the area of self-confidence, now the children could willingly take a risk, experienced a ‘sense of mission’, were extremely committed to the task of play making, had a very high level of enthusiasm and could take delight in invention for its own sake.

Kanha, Sarla, Lali and Nihar could now even understand the concept of social ostracism in school and it did not bother them as much as it did when we first started.

Table 23: Creativity scores

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle3+4	Cycle 5	Cycle 6
1. Mukul	47	47	87	87	87
2. Samir	105	110	128	87	129
3. Chandani	91	92	121	139	146.2
4. Lali	75	89	132	153	153
5. Manni	118	126	126	146	146
6. Kanha	76	83	109	141	156
7. Snehal	106	114	120	120	139
8. Pratik	116	116	116	120	120
9. Sarla	87	107	116	125	137
10.Nihar	48	50	91	113	143

[1= not present, 2= minimal present, 3=somewhat present, 4= moderately present, 5=strongly present]

Level x 34 points on the creativity rating scale = score

1 x 34=34 = not present
 2 x 34=68 = minimal present
 3 x 34=102 = somewhat present
 4 x 34=136 = moderately present
 5 x 34=170 = strongly present

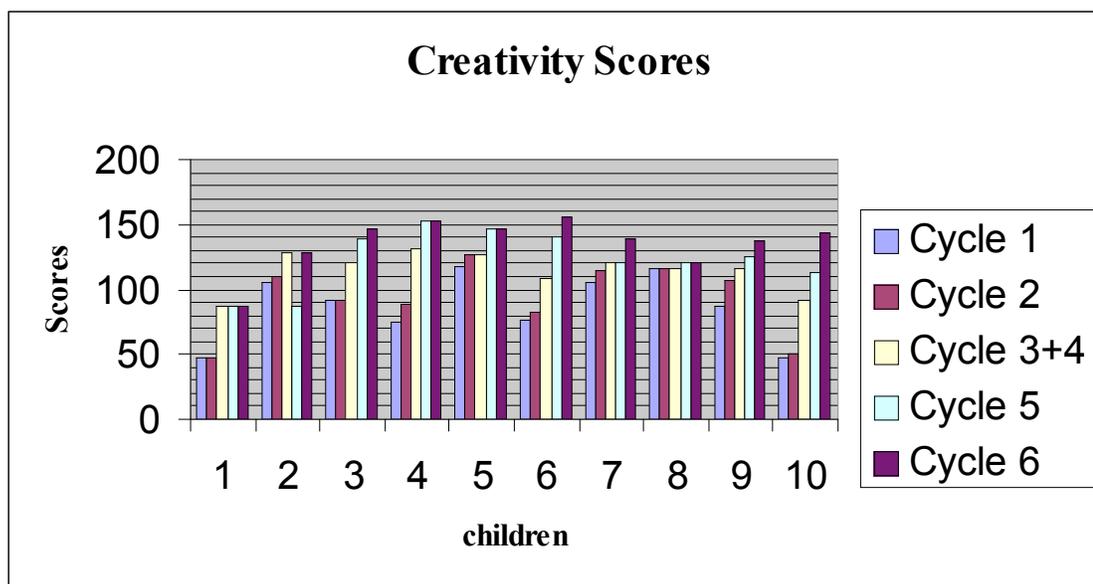


Table 24: Creativity graph.

Moving On

Heathcote (Heston, 1994) advocated ‘*the camaraderie approach*’ (p.59) as a way of looking at the development of thinking. Our relationship in Cycle 5, shifted from that of teacher and students to that of collaborators. My teaching further developed and I started using Heathcote’s innovative technique ‘teaching-at-risk’. A teaching-at-risk lesson is one where both, child and curriculum needs and objectives are mirrored.

---- Now that Mukul has become more comfortable, he is more regular in his attendance. Is it not funny, the more comfortable they (the children especially the shy ones) are, the more regular they become and the more regular they the more comfortable they become.... Nihar has really gained from being regular. He started off by just being there. I kept thinking at that at least he is watching the others. One can learn just by listening. I remember telling his mother and sister that they should not worry if he does not actively participate in the beginning. For a shy child, sometimes it is enough that he/she attends the class and watches the others and listens. Now he is doing so much more.

___ they wanted to hear their recorded voices. Nihar was the first one to say he wanted to hear what we have recorded. So I asked him to speak, to say something, which I

could record and then we could re-wind the tape and listen. A year back I'm sure he would not have said a thing, Samir would have demonstrated what to do (cf. Appendix 2, p.4) Nihar would have smiled but definitely not done anything. However this time he started telling us about a soldier whose first death anniversary they were commemorating, in their building ----

Journal 16.8.2003

Nihar's story

It more than a year since we started storytelling, today I want to tell a story on my own. I don't need Girl to give me a beginning or an emotion or a situation.

"Girl, in our building... A man who was not married, his one year became." I started speaking slowly. But no one understood what I wanted to say so I repeated, "Girl, in our building ...a man's one-year became."

Girl now understands us well; she knows some of us have a problem with words. So she asked me if I meant the first anniversary. You know how I sometimes am not sure of how to express what I want to I just said, "Arr ... arr ...army ..."

Girl immediately understood that I meant death anniversary. I wanted so much to share the story with everyone but I was struggling with words. That doesn't bother Girl.

Remember I told you last time, Girl is so curious she always wants to know more.

So she stared asking me questions like; He lived in your building? When did he die? How did he die?

Now that is what I call making it easy! I could get my ideas together and continue my story. Sachin, the soldier was up in the mountains at a height of 300 feet. And he slipped, and fell.

"Ohh my God!!" exclaimed Girl.

"You know he was going to become a Major on the fifteenth of August." I said.

Girl and everybody thought I had finished my story. But no, I had more to tell... and that was the most interesting part of the story.

"And..." I continued trying to get everybody's attention.

"We tell no...? That pundit [astrologer]..."

"Pundit told that ..."

"He will ...only ...Ahhhhh..."

"Means..."

"Live..."

"Means..."

"He will..."

"We tell no...Bachgaya..." [in Hindi it means 'to be saved']

Girl didn't understand what I was saying and asked, "He won't become ...?"

"Ahhh ..."

"Taaaa..."

"Paaaa..." I struggled

Snehal thought that was funny. And started imitating me, "taa ...pa..."

Girl corrected him, "Don't do that." But I don't mind I know they are my friends and not really, really laughing at me. And now I am also more sure of myself. So I went on...

"Pundit told only three times...he will be saved...this

Ahh ...How we tell ...Means first time... in camp a bomb burst...then second time ...ahh ...tha ..."