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TITLE A response from the perspective of Finland

YEAR 2024

DOI 10.14324/111.9781800080638

VERSION Publisher's PDF

CITATION Souto A-M, Lappalainen S & Niemi A-M. A response from the perspective of Finland. In Brown, N., Ince, A. and Ramlackhan, K. (eds). 2024. *Creativity in Education: International Perspectives*. London: UCL Press. <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781800080638>, 162–163.

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A response from the perspective of Finland

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The chapter authored by our Chinese colleagues introduced a case study examining how creativity is taught to future kindergarten teachers in the study unit titled Kindergarten Curriculum. The chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the recent developments in Chinese state-centred early childhood education and training. For us, the chapter highlighted how global trends and country specific features are blended in national education institutions to form a particular kind of compound, which is in line with political atmosphere and value base of the state.

The authors point out the problem in defining creativity. After reading this chapter it seems to us that creativity is a relational concept by its origin, and it gets its content and meaning in a local context. It would be interesting to know more about how creativity is understood in this country-specific context, and what is seen as creative in this specific pedagogical approach that was introduced in the chapter. Creativity in China seems to be associated with aesthetic or art education, but also with so-called child-centred pedagogy, which is strongly emphasised in many parts of the world, from the Nordic countries to Australia, and with a participatory approach, in which pupils' or students' agency is considered in all earnest.

In the chapter's conclusion, the authors point out that the case study documents the shift in practice on a teacher education programme from a traditional didactic pedagogy to a more collaborative and participatory approach. But what is the 'traditional didactic pedagogy'? For example, in the Nordic context the concept of 'didactics' does not necessarily include authoritative connotations, which we assume to be included in the definition of 'traditional didactic pedagogy'.

After reading the chapter, we started discussing the difference and connections between the concepts of belonging/participation and creativity. We assume that in Finnish educational contexts, creativity in learning is often discussed in terms of belonging and participation; and engaging children in learning processes. The importance of play in itself is also strongly emphasised in Finnish early childhood education contexts.

The authors raised the question of whether it is the learning results or the learning processes that should receive the greatest attention and be valued more as an educational goal. In Finland, the practices of self-assessment are already embedded in the national curriculum and in teachers' pedagogical practices. Although these practices emphasise the importance of learning processes, from the critical perspective, the objective of teaching self-assessment to children can be seen as an objective of shaping children to become self-evaluative, continuously self-developing, lifelong learning individuals, thus active and productive contributors to the future's labour market.