Creative Education: Its future in the Rear View Mirror

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Abstract: With the emergence of cross domain disciplines like outsourcing, we are witnessing a trend towards creative knowledge, rational application and innovation. The economy and society built on logical linear, computer like capabilities of 'information age' is now tending towards an economy and society built on the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities called 'the conceptual age'. Creative industries are now moving from the margins to the mainstream of economy and policy thinking as they will create the jobs of the future. Thus, more and more people have realized that creative education is the mission of the education in the new century. However, the future is made, not of certainties, but is present in our thoughts and dreams. Therefore, the future belongs to people who will not limit their thinking in terms of realities, facts and knowledge; but search for the future in the rear view mirror, because; there, we can find the part of reality that can be verified. Thus, it is essential for creative students to change their mind set and build their innovative skills towards the upcoming era. Hence, this paper seeks the knowledge regarding these issues. The paper gives the general overview of the global trend, illuminates on the creative human resources needed in the upcoming era and finally proposed creative teaching approach for the conceptual age.

Keywords: Conceptual age, creative education, creative industries, creative teaching approach.

Introduction

The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind; that is, creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers. These people (artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers) will now reap society's richest rewards and its greatest joys (Pink, 2005). With the emergence of cross domain disciplines like outsourcing, we are witnessing a trend towards creative knowledge, rational application and innovation which will be dominated by new senses (design, story, symphony, empathy, play and meaning) thereby creating a need to diverge from the current reliance on linear and sequential algorithmic practices in outsourcing and to adopt cognition based approaches (Patki, T., Patki & Kulkarni, 2009).

Therefore, the economy and society built on logical linear, computer like capabilities of 'information age' is now tending towards an economy and society built on the inventive, empathic, big-picture capabilities called 'the conceptual age'. Creative industries are now moving from the margins to the mainstream of economy and policy thinking, as they will create the jobs of the future. Thus, more and more people have realized that creative education is the mission of the education in the new century. According to Virtual World Teacher (2010), creative education involves activities with active cognitive processes such as creating, Problem solving, reasoning, decision making and evaluation. In addition, students are intrinsically motivated to learn due to the meaningful nature of the immersive learning environment and activities.

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The Global Trend

The earliest humans known as "hunter-gatherers" lived primarily on scavenging where, rather than killing large animals themselves for meat, they used carcasses of large animals killed by other predators or carcasses from animals that died by natural causes (David & Mark, 1990). They are society in which most or all their food are obtained from wild plants and animals (Marlowe, 2005). Following the invention of "Agricultural Age", hunter-gathers where displaced by farming and pastoralist groups. This group relies mainly on

domesticated species (plants and animals), physical strength, and manual skill and was labor intensive. They were intuitively driven with spiritual attachment, poverty and feudalism.

However, the advent of industrial revolution (1750-1850) brought about the "Industrial Age" where agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation and technology had a profound effect on the social, economic and cultural conditions of the times. Industrial age was technology and material driven which result in materialism, greed, war automation and mass production. The next civilization was the "Information Age" which is a knowledge based period that is characterized by the ability of individuals to transfer information freely, and to have instant access to information that would have been difficult or impossible to find previously. It's a knowledge driven period which enhance automation, skills and also result in globalization. The key focus of information age is knowledge acquisition and application. However, we are now progressing from an era that was information-dependent towards the era that revolves around concept development; this era is referred to as "Conceptual Age". The 21st century will revolve around concept development which will have spiritual and emotional content. Figure 1 illustrates the developmental trends, right from the 18th century to the upcoming 21st century.
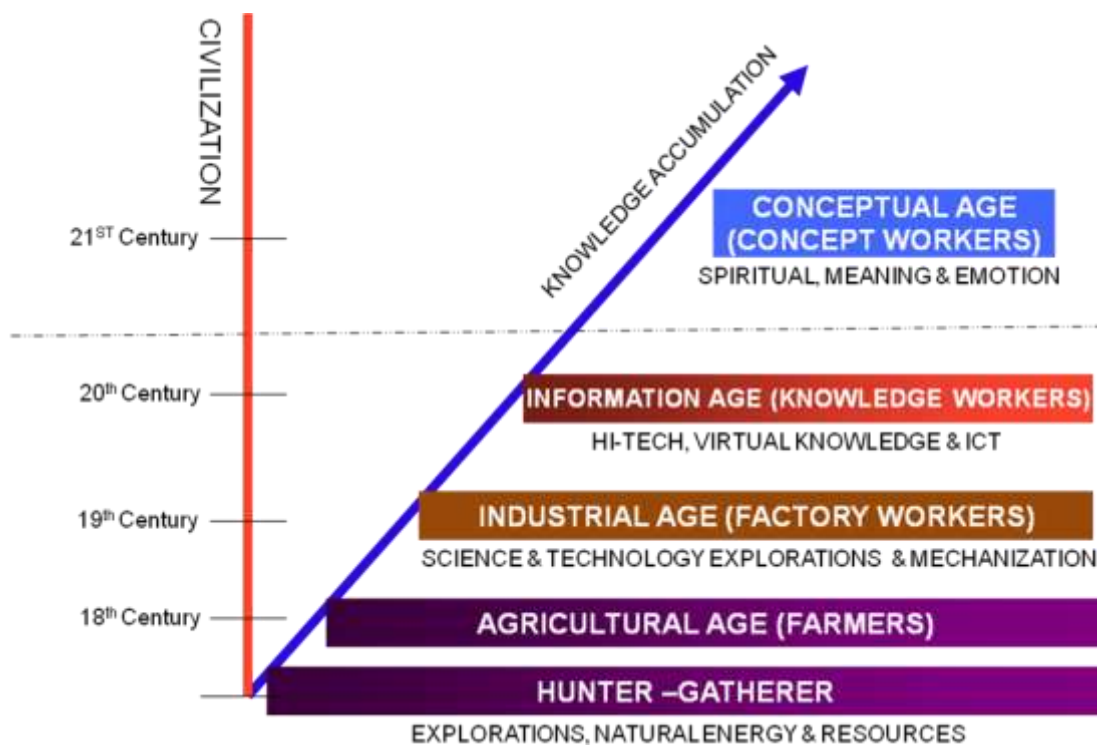

Figure 1: The developmental trend

The Creative Human Resources Needed in Conceptual Age

Creative industry refers to a range of economic activities, which are concerned with the generation, or exploration of knowledge and information (Wikipedia, 2012). They can also be referred to as cultural industry (Hesmondhalgh, 2002) or creative economy (Howkins, 2001). According to the definition coined in the UK in 1994, creative industry refers to that segment of the economy that is involved either directly or indirectly in the creation, manufacture, production, broadcast and distribution of copyright protected materials ("Borneo Post Online", 2010).

However, despite being an emerging field of study, creative industries have already come to constitute an important sphere of practice representing an important sector of the economy. Therefore, creative industries have been seen to become increasingly important to economy well-being; that is, human creativity is one of the ultimate economic resources (Florida, 2002). According to Landry & Bianchini (1995), the 21st century industries will depend greatly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation. Thus, creative industries will move from the margins to the mainstream of economy and policy thinking, as they will create the jobs of the future. Figure 2 illustrates the job trend in the coming years.
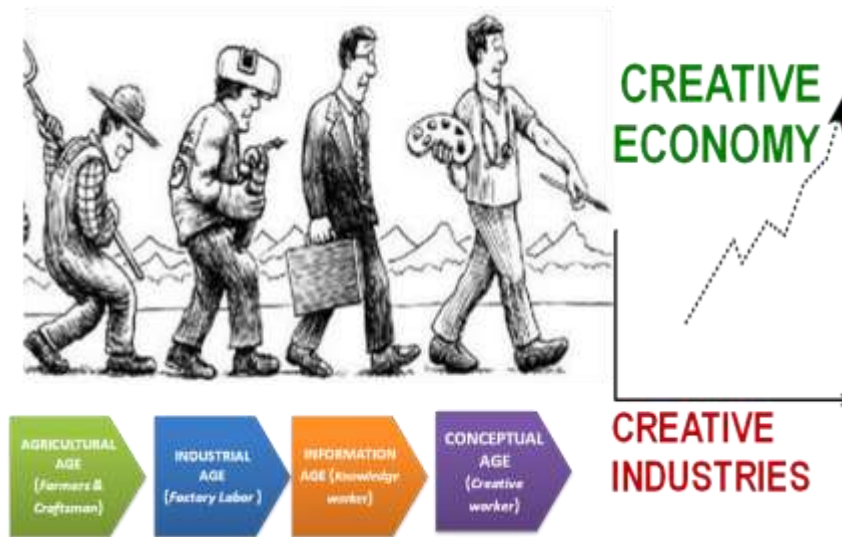
Figure 2: Job trend in the coming years (Aziz & Olalere, 2013).

Creative industries comprises advertising, architecture, art, craft, design, fashion, film, music, performing art, publishing, research and development, software, toys and games, TV and radio, and video games (Howkins, 2001). Also, DCMS[1] (2001) describes creative industries as those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through generation and exploration of intellectual property. Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind like inventions, literary and artistic works; and symbols, names, images and design used in commerce.

Creative activities are natural activities of individual and groups seeking solutions to tangible and intangible problems. Solutions to problems can be science and technology based or management based. Thus innovation happens in all generations of civilization. Figure 3 classified the creative human resources needed in the conceptual age into four groups which include; Theorists, Organizers, Humanitarians and Innovators.
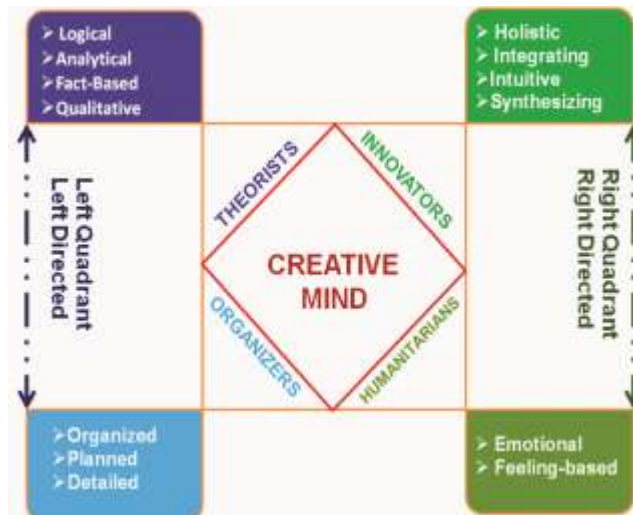

Figure 3: The creative human resources needed in conceptual age

i. **Theorists**

These are people who can adapt and integrate observations into complex and logically sound theories. They think problems through in a step by step way. They tend to be perfectionists who like to fit things into a rational scheme. They are logical and analytical rather than subjective in their thinking and are also fact-based.

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ii.   Organizers

These are people with ability to rally together resources such as people, materials and funders to create more efficient process, smarter solutions and better businesses. Some of their qualities are that, they are organised and sequential in thinking, and also planned into details.

iii.   Innovators

Innovators are people with ability to introduce into reality something better than before (Wikipedia 2012). They have a holistic mind set, intuitive in thinking, ability to integrate and synthesis ideas.

iv.   Humanitarians

These are people with ethic of kindness. They have interpersonal skills to communicate and interact with other people and ability to meet people's emotional need.

Creative Teaching Approach for the Conceptual Age

Designers, through training and experience have been able to develop different lens through which to see the world (Rob 2012). They use observation and insights to know what works and what doesn't, thereby creating innovative solutions for everyday problems. They constantly deconstruct and rebuild objects and ideas that most people accept as static and fixed, thereby making everything negotiable, malleable and improvable (Tina 2009). This approach is believed to be viable for learning process in the upcoming 21st century where students will be evaluated on the way they approach a problem rather than whether they come up with the right answer. This approach will build creative student towards the non-linear design solutions of the conceptual age.

Therefore, teachers/lecturers needs to re-invent how knowledge is passed along, they need to engage students to willingly take risks, empower them to believe that they can be creative by practicing, learning and encouraging them to problem solving, prototyping, fail and iteration. This will help students to think "outside of the box" rather than being confined by what is possible. It's a comprehensive approach to understanding of the conceptual age and how concept workers can successfully thrive in the era.

Pink (2005) divided thinking into L-directed and R-directed. The L-directed is sequential, logical and analytical which was considered important for the information age. The R-directed thinking is the thinking needed for the conceptual age, it is non-linear, intuitive and has holistic qualities. It is dominated by six senses which are design, story, symphony, empathy, play and meaning (Pink 2005). Therefore, the creative teaching approach for the conceptual age is based on these six senses.

A. Design

Design is a plan, pattern or an intention of how things will be done. According to Tina (2009), applying the techniques of product design to education will help loosen the narrow, rigid process of traditional learning and also show teachers how to tap into students' deep wells of creativity, encourage them to see nuanced problems from inside the very core of an issue and make critical thinking essential to solving problem in the 21st century. With these techniques, teachers need to re-design their teaching approach by asking questions and giving tasks that don't have predetermined outcomes. They need to let students explore, construct, investigate, try, and most importantly, fail as iteration will lead them into even better ideas (Tina 2009).

B. Story

This is how information and ideas are being passed from one person to another. According to Pink (2005), story is a context enriched by emotion. Therefore, teaching or passing out knowledge inform of story will enhance the understanding of students and also make it stick to their memory because, "the emotional impact of story makes information stick" (Pink 2005).

C. Symphony

Pink (2005) defines symphony to be largely about relationships. Therefore, teachers should have the ability to blend students' knowledge of diverse talents and skills to push the boundary of accepted practices (Pink 2005). They need to have close interact and cordially relationship with their students in order to be able to impact on them.

D. Empathy

Empathy is the ability to enter someone else's shoe, to care for others. This will be highly required in learning process as teacher will need to be considerate, have listening hears and not just dictatorship. They need to show care and concern for the students; these will help teachers to know the emotive response of students towards what they are teaching.

E. Play

Pink (2005) proposed that conceptual age will allow us to combine both work and play. Therefore, teachers can combine learning and play in their teaching. The focus of play will be on the process of learning rather than what was learnt, activity rather than the result and also the student-teacher relationship rather than the outcome of the teaching. With this, laughter and lightheartedness will be of benefit not only to the health, but also the learning process.

F. Meaning

This is the basic desire to find purpose and meaning in one's life (Pink 2005). This is one of the focuses of the conceptual age; therefore, teachers need to teach student how to produce project work with meaning attached to it. This can be achieved by engaging students on project works based on a theme or title. This will develop the students in conceptualizing sustainable and emotionally durable designs.

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